COLLECTOR'S ITEM: LAST PRINTED ISSUE

DECEMBER 2010
$4.99

Q&A : Chipper Discusses His Rehab, Future

Up Close & Personal: Fredi Gonzalez

ChopTalk

THE OFFICIAL MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE ATLANTA BRAVES

PLAYING With FIRE

Averaging Nearly 2 Strikeouts Per Inning, Craig Kimbrel Is A Closer In Waiting

STATE OF THE FARM

Our Annual Review Of The Top Prospects

2011 SEASON TICKETS ON SALE NOW.

Don't miss out on what happens in 2011. Save over 50% in select sections.

- *Great seating locations available.*
- *Buy 2011 season tickets by December 17th and pay 2010 prices*
- *Season Ticket Holder benefits include various payment options, discounted ticket purchases, personal service and exclusive events.*

MARCH/APRIL

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		29 EXH MIN 7:00	30 EXH MIN 12:00	31 WAS	1	2 WAS
3 WAS	4 MIL	5 MIL	6 MIL	7 MIL	8 PHI 7:30	9 PHI 7:00
10 PHI 1:30	11	12 FLA 7:00	13 FLA 7:00	14 FLA 7:00	15 NYM 7:30	16 NYM 7:00
17 NYM 1:30	18 LAD	19 LAD	20 LAD	21 LAD	22 SF	23 SF
24 SF	25 SD	26 SD	27 SD	28	29 STL 7:30	30 STL 7:00

MAY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1 STL 1:30	2 MIL 7:00	3 MIL 7:00	4 MIL 7:00	5 MIL 7:00	6 PHI	7 PHI
8 PHI	9	10 WAS 7:00	11 WAS 7:00	12 WAS 7:00	13 PHI 7:30	14 PHI 7:00
15 PHI 1:30	16 HOU 7:00	17 HOU 1:00	18 ARZ	19 ARZ	20 LAA	21 LAA
22 LAA	23	24 PIT	25 PIT	26	27 CIN 7:30	28 CIN 7:00
29 CIN 1:30	30 SD 1:00	31 SD 7:00				

JUNE

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1 SD 7:00	2	3 NYM	4 NYM
5 NYM	6	7 FLA	8 FLA	9 FLA	10 HOU	11 HOU
12 HOU	13 HOU	14 NYM 7:00	15 NYM 7:00	16 NYM 7:00	17 TEX 7:30	18 TEX 7:00
19 TEX 1:30	20 TOR 7:00	21 TOR 7:00	22 TOR 1:00	23	24 SD	25 SD
26 SD	27 SEA	28 SEA	29 SEA	30		

JULY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1 BAL 7:30	2 BAL 7:00
3 BAL 1:30	4 COL 7:00	5 COL 7:00	6 COL 7:00	7 COL 1:00	8 PHI	9 PHI
10 PHI	11 12 13 14 ALL-STAR GAME - ARIZONA				15 WAS 7:30	16 WAS 7:00
17 WAS 1:30	18 COL	19 COL	20 COL	21 COL	22 CIN	23 CIN
24 CIN	25 PIT 7:00	26 PIT 7:00	27 PIT 7:00	28 PIT 7:00	29 FLA 7:30	30 FLA 7:00
31 FLA 1:30						

AUGUST

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1 WAS	2 WAS	3 WAS	4	5 NYM	6 NYM
7 NYM	8 FLA	9 FLA	10 FLA	11	12 CHC 7:30	13 CHC 7:00
14 CHC 1:30	15 SF 7:00	16 SF 7:00	17 SF 7:00	18 SF 7:00	19 ARZ 7:30	20 ARZ 7:00
21 ARZ 1:30	22 CHC	23 CHC	24 CHC	25 CHC	26 NYM	27 NYM
28 NYM	29	30 WAS 7:00	31 WAS 7:00			

SEPTEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1 WAS 7:00	2 LAD 7:30	3 LAD 7:00
4 LAD 1:30	5 PHI	6 PHI	7 PHI	8	9 STL	10 STL
11 STL	12 FLA 7:00	13 FLA 7:00	14 FLA 12:00	15	16 NYM 7:30	17 NYM 7:00
18 NYM 1:30	19 FLA	20 FLA	21 FLA	22	23 WAS	24 WAS
25 WAS	26 PHI 7:00	27 PHI 7:00	28 PHI 7:00	29	30	

*All times are Eastern and subject to change. Schedule subject to change.

Home Game

SECURE YOUR 2011 SEASON TICKETS TODAY

braves.com/seasontickets 404-577-9100

© 2010, Atlanta National League Baseball Club, Inc. All rights reserved.™ The Braves script and tomahawk are trademarks of the Atlanta National League Baseball Club, Inc. All rights reserved.

BATTING ORDER

DECEMBER 2010

POWER HITTERS

6-9
FROM AMERICAN DREAM... TO AMERICA'S TEAM
An Up Close & Personal Profile
Of New Manager Fredi Gonzalez By Patty Rasmussen

10
INSTANT POWER
Acquisition Of 30-Homer Man Dan Uggla Provides The Lineup Just What It Needs
By Gary Caruso

18-20
PLAYING PEPPER
Chipper Jones Talks About His Injury, The Rehab,
And The Future By Patty Rasmussen

22-25
PLAYING WITH FIRE
Averaging Nearly 2 Strikeouts Per Inning, Top Prospect Craig Kimbrel
Is A Closer In Waiting By Melanie D.G. Kaplan

26-29
STATE OF THE FARM
Already Deep In Pitching, The Pipeline Of Talent To Atlanta
Now Is Well-Stocked With Position Players, Too By Bill Ballew

32-33
CHOPTALK 2005-2010
A Sampling Of Our Covers From The Last Six Years

34-36
HE'S ON FIRST
Only 21 Years Old, Rookie Freddie Freeman
Is Primed For A Starting Role By Jon Cooper

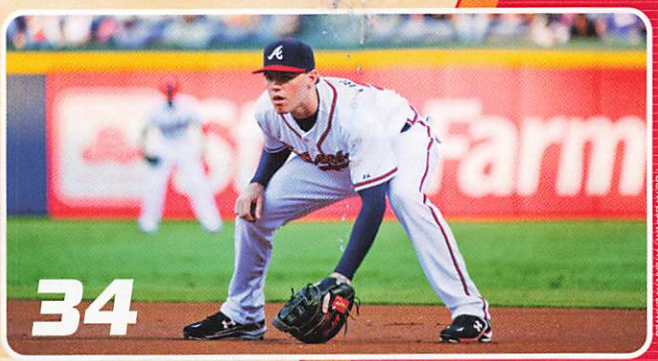
38-40
THE NEXT CHAPTER
Bobby Cox Isn't Exactly Riding Off Into the Sunset,
But His Plans Include Much More Than Baseball By Patty Rasmussen

41
STORIES OF BOBBY
Smoltz Credits Cox - As GM And Manager -
For Changing His Career And His Life By Patty Rasmussen

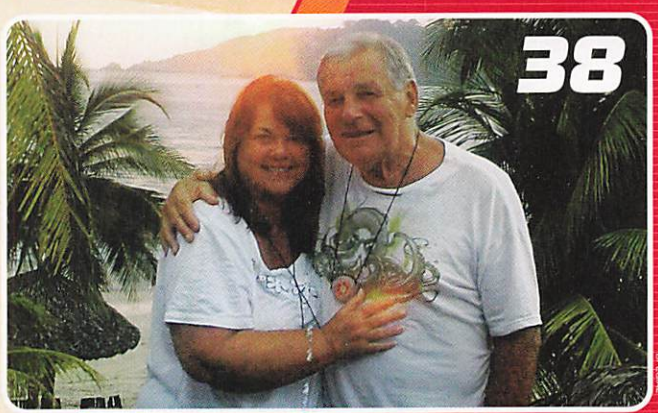
42-43
STRAIGHT SHOOTER
New Bench Coach Carlos 'Six-Gun' Tosca Always Tells Gonzalez
Exactly What He's Thinking By Jon Cooper

48
FOR PETE'S SAKE
Franchise Hall Of Fame Broadcaster Van Wieren
Undergoing Treatment For Lymphoma By Mark Bowman of MLB.com

LASISTER FOOTBALL

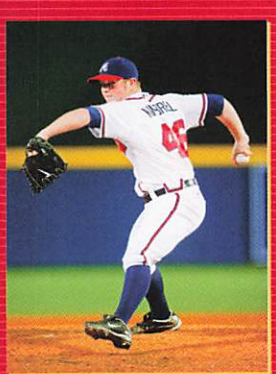


POUYA DIANAT/ATLANTA BRAVES



SPECIAL

COVER CREDITS
CRAIG KIMBREL
by Pouya Dianat/
Atlanta Braves
Design by Clark Odom



BATTING ORDER

DECEMBER 2010

SINGLES HITTERS

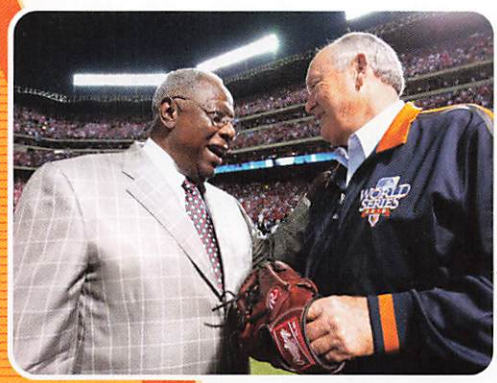
12-13 SCOREBOARD
14-15 BUNTS & BASEHITS
16-17 OFF THE FIELD
37 BEHIND THE NUMBERS | By Steve Fall
54-55 HEROES & HISTORY
A Former Workhorse Starting Pitcher, Pat Jarvis Now Labors In His Nursery
By Brian Knapp
56 ALUMNI NOTES
58-59 BEYOND BASEBALL | By Patty Rasmussen
60-61 TALKIN' CHOP
62 XTRA INNINGS
The Perils Of Head-First Sliding
By Bill Ballew

PITCHERS

11 PAINTING THE CORNERS | By Jay Busbee
15 FRANK WREN
17 FREDI GONZALEZ
25 BATTER UP! By Jair Jurrjens
36 AROUND BASEBALL | By Ken Rosenthal
57 GARY CARUSO
61 JOHNNY SAJEM'S CARTOON

PINCH-HITTERS

49 TURNER FIELD/TICKET INFO
50-51 2011 SCHEDULE CALENDAR
52-53 SPRING TRAINING SCHEDULE, INFO
55 MEMORIES | By Steve Fall
56 BIRTHDAYS



RICH PILLING/GETTY IMAGES

12

PATTY RASMUSSEN

ON DECK

44-45 FARM SYSTEM ROUNDUP | By Bill Ballew
45 DOWN ON THE FARM By Chris Masters
46 FARM TEAM SCHEDULES

VOLUME 6, NUMBER 12

CHOPTALK USPS Periodicals Publication 022-732; ISSN 1555-1547 is published monthly for $37.95 per year ($56.95 Canada and Mexico; $76.95 other international; payment in U.S. dollars only) by Wonderdog Publishing, Inc.

Copyright 2010 with all rights reserved. Reproduction or use, without permission, of any content, in whole or part - in any manner - is prohibited.

Office of publication is located at 12829 Trinity Dr., Stafford, Tex. 77477-4214. Visit Braves.com/ChopTalk. This is the Official Monthly Magazine of the Atlanta Braves. Single copy price is $4.99. Periodical postage paid at Stafford, Tex., and additional mailing offices.

ChopTalk

THE **OFFICIAL** MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE **ATLANTA BRAVES**

BOBBY COX POSTER!

This 20 1/2" x 16 1/4" Image of Bobby Cox Was Created By Acclaimed Artist Steve Penley Especially for ChopTalk, And The Original Painting Was Presented To Cox Sept. 29 At Turner Field.

A Great Way To Remember The Greatest Manager In Braves History

Limited Edition

A True Collector's Delight

Makes A Great Gift!

○ Enclosed is $14.95 (includes postage/handling) to receive one (1) Bobby Cox Poster that is unfolded and mailed in a tube.

○ Additional unfolded posters mailed in the same tube are $9.95 each.

TOTAL ENCLOSED

$ _____

○ CHECK ENCLOSED ○ BILL MY CREDIT CARD

○ MC ○ VISA ○ AMEX ○ DISCOVER

CC# _____ EXP.

SEND TO:

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ APT. NO.

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP

BILL TO:

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ APT. NO.

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP

Clip, Photocopy or Hand Print This Coupon

MAIL IT IN!
SEND NAME, ADDRESS AND CHECK OR CARD INFO TO:

CHOPTALK
P.O. BOX 81247
CONYERS, GA
30013-9247

PHONE IT IN! | 1-877-655-2467

Fredi Gonzalez with his wife, Pamela, enjoying themselves at Bobby Cox's fundraiser for the Homeless Pets Foundation in 2006, shortly after he was named manager of the Marlins.

An Up Close & Personal Profile Of New Manager Fredi Gonzalez

From American Dream... To America's Team

BY PATTY RASMUSSEN

Fredi Gonzalez, the man chosen to replace Bobby Cox as manager of the Braves, has as compelling a life story as his "small town, farm boy" predecessor, but with a distinctly Latin flavor.

Cuban-born Gonzalez, 46, came to the United States in 1966 when he was almost three years old. Like other Cuban immigrants, his parents, Fredi and Caridad, sought freedom from dictator Fidel Castro's communist regime, traveling to the U.S. on a "Freedom Flight," from Havana, and settling in Miami, Florida.

Though he's too young to remember his parents' decision to leave Cuba or the family's flight to America, he credits their choice and example of hard work for his own success in life.

"Everything for me goes back to upbringing," said Gonzalez. "I saw my parents work two jobs. My dad did everything he could - it was manual labor. My mother was a teacher in Cuba and had to go back to school in order to get a certificate to teach here. I saw hard work, determination, and I saw them living the 'American Dream.'"

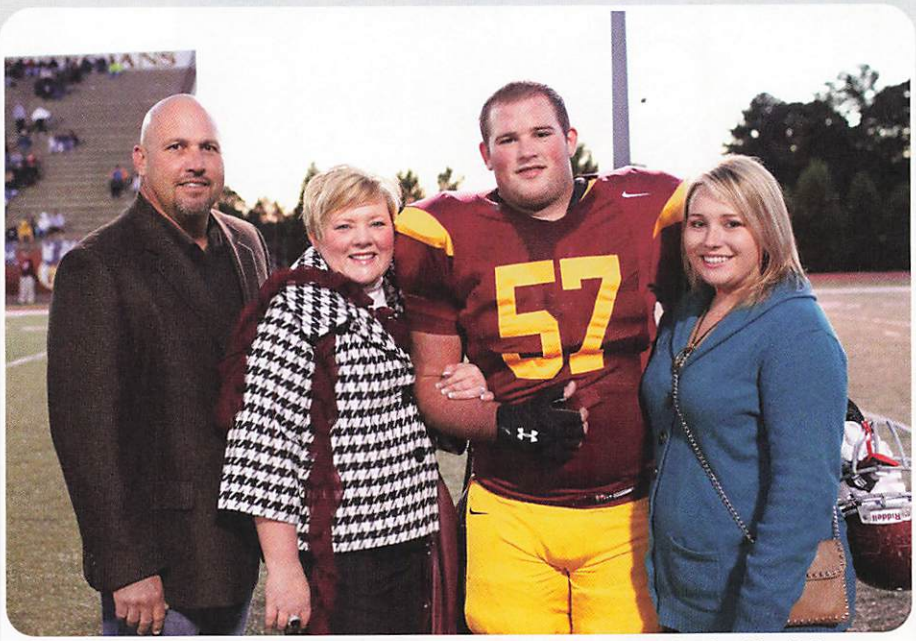
And now his parents see their son living his version of the American Dream. Gonzalez is a highly respected baseball man - a successful coach and now manager of what once was known as "America's Team" in America's national pastime.

He follows in the footsteps of one of his baseball mentors, Cox, and while much has been made of their similarities in handling players, respect for the game, and loyalty, there are some significant differences, too.

When Cox was growing up, he was known to family and friends as reserved to the point of shyness. The opposite is true of Gonzalez. Just ask Paul Cooper, his health and life management skills teacher at Miami's Southridge High School where Gonzalez graduated in 1982.

PATTY RASMUSSEN

"He was a good student, and a good talker, especially in class," said Cooper. "I think I gave him a 'C' in conduct!"



LASSITER FOOTBALL

Fredi and Pamela Gonzalez, with children Alex and Gigi at a Lassiter High School football game where Alex was a 6-foot-1, 265-pound offensive lineman this year as a senior.

He described Gonzalez in glowing terms.

"Fredi was a really popular kid, likeable," said Cooper. "He was an all-American kid, for a Cuban kid!"

"I was a normal kid," Gonzalez said. "I didn't do mischief or things like that. I accidentally broke the neighbors' windows with a baseball, but I always respected adults and said, 'Yes, sir' and 'Yes, ma'am.'"

The oldest of three children - one sister a year younger and a brother two years his junior - Gonzalez knew nothing would come easy.

"I knew I had to work hard, do everything I could to get where I wanted to be," he said. "Nothing in this life is given to you, and it doesn't hurt to have some luck."

An all-city catcher, Gonzalez was drafted out of high school by the New York Yankees in the 16th round and promptly went to the Gulf Coast League Yankees. One of his coaches at rookie ball, Carlos Tosca, became a mentor and friend.

"Fredi was an absolute pleasure to coach," said Tosca, who served as Gonzalez's bench coach when he managed the Marlins (2007-10) and will join him in Atlanta. "His teammates loved him."

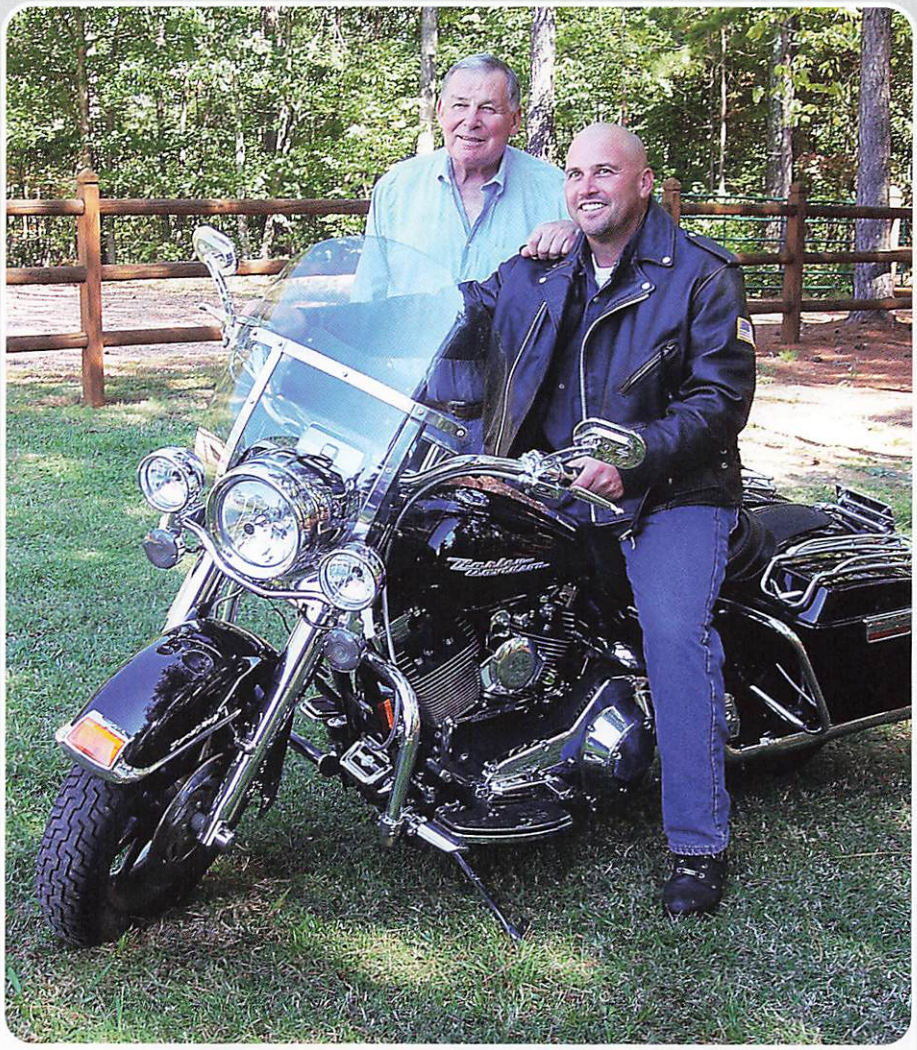
Tosca said Gonzalez's work ethic and drive were apparent from the beginning.

"He was an 18-year-old kid, and he worked so hard - paid attention and never missed the signs. You give a lot of credit to his dad for being the person he is."

Hard work aside, Gonzalez admits he was not a great ballplayer.

"I was a pitcher's best friend," he quipped, borrowing a line from his friend and former Braves coach, Bobby Dews. "On one end, I could catch, and on the other, I

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



PATTY RASMUSSEN

Gonzalez, who has become an avid motorcycle rider, with friend, former boss, and now predecessor, Bobby Cox, at Cox's farm in Adairsville, Ga.

made quick outs!"

"If his offense had been better, I think he could have been a major league player," said Tosca who also coached Gonzalez at Class-A Greensboro in 1983-84. "He could catch and throw, but his hitting wasn't there. But he was drafted and played in the minor leagues, and there's a lot to that."

Gonzalez played in the minor leagues for six seasons, never rising above the Double A level. His career average was only .199, with 20 home runs and 118 RBIs in 344 games. His playing days drew to a close in 1988. By that time, he had been dating Pamela, who he'd known in high school, for several years. While he played minor league baseball, she went to college and worked in human resources, both in education and medical settings in Miami. They married in 1988.

"I probably could have hung around a couple more years," said Gonzalez. "But I had a chance to coach at the University of Tennessee so I took it."

He was a graduate assistant to the Tennessee coaching staff, but the position gave him experience in coaching at a level comparable to minor league baseball. He also took classes at the university.

"I really liked it," said Gonzalez. "Then something came up. You guessed it - baseball."

With just 20 games left in their season, Gonzalez took over managing the Miami Miracle, an independent league team in Florida. He stayed with them for the following season, 1991, and it turned out to be a coaching stepping stone. The job led to his being named the first-ever minor league manager in the Florida Marlins organization in 1992. At every level, Gonzalez enjoyed success.

He managed low A-ball in Erie, Pennsylvania (1992) and took his 40-37 team to the New York Penn League championship series. In 1993, he was named the California League Manager of the Year when his High Desert Mavericks went 85-52 and won the California League championship. Gonzalez managed the Class-A Brevard County Manatees in Melbourne, Florida in 1994. Once again he was named Manager of the Year, this time for the Florida State League.

After three seasons with Brevard (1994-1996), Gonzalez headed north to Portland, Maine, where in 1997 he was named Eastern League Manager of the Year.

He was promoted to Triple-A Charlotte in 1998 and made the jump to the major league club in 1999 when he became the Florida Marlins' third base coach. He stayed with the Marlins until the Braves organization lured him away in 2002 to become the manager of their Triple-A club. His resume also includes serving as a coach on the 2007 National League All-Star team.

He was asked to join Cox's Atlanta staff as third base coach in 2003, where he remained until 2006.

Gonzalez confessed he was comfortable in the Braves organization, even when the Marlins came calling, looking to hire him as their manager after Joe Girardi was let go at the end of the 2006 season.

"People don't leave the Braves, and I didn't want to leave either," he said. "I remember telling John Schuerholz, 'I don't know about leaving...' He sat me down and aired me out! He basically told me, 'No. You need to do this.'"

Through all the job changes and children being born - daughter Gigi in 1991 and son Alex in 1993 - Pamela continued to work in Miami. The family kept their home there, choosing the stability and support from their surrounding extended families over the gypsy baseball lifestyle.

"We made that conscious decision to keep our family in one place," said Pamela.

During summer vacations, she and the children would visit wherever Gonzalez was managing. The family relocated to the Atlanta suburb of Marietta in 2003. Pamela believes the stability helped them keep their children grounded and focused.

Gigi, 19, is a college sophomore, and Alex, 17, is a high school senior.

"They were born into the baseball life," said Pamela, speaking about the poise her children exhibit. "But they also know we have a 'real' life."

Gonzalez heartily concurred.

"You can't do any of this - I wouldn't have gotten this far without a good wife," he said. "I don't know what (Pamela) thought she

was getting into when she married me, but she has been a trooper! Not many women could do what she's done. She is a strong, independent woman, and she's been exactly what I needed."

Family became even more important in June when Gonzalez was abruptly fired by the Marlins.

"Naturally you're upset," he said. "But then I realized I got to spend almost the entire summer at home. I attended every one of Alex's football practices and games in his senior year. Some days I'd drive to Statesboro to have lunch with my daughter at college (Georgia Southern), then drive back the same day."

Aside from spending time with his family, one of Gonzalez's passions off the field is something he picked up during his first stint with Atlanta.

"I rented a room from a guy, Chet Parker, and he had two or three motorcycles," said Gonzalez. "I had always wanted to ride. Terry Pendleton rode, so I asked them to teach me."

The conversation heated up during 2003 spring training. Gonzalez and Pendleton visited Harley Davidson shops, and when Gonzalez returned to Atlanta, he practiced riding in Chet's front yard on a dirt bike. As he grew more comfortable, Gonzalez rode Chet's Harley Davidson Road King, which he eventually purchased and still rides today.

"We'd meet up at the top of I-285 on Sunday mornings and ride down to the stadium together," recalled Pendleton. "At first, we only took side streets, never the interstate, because Fredi didn't feel comfortable. Chet would ride in front, Fredi was in the middle, and I'd ride behind him. We did that until he finally felt comfortable enough to get on the interstate."

Gonzalez is plenty comfortable on his bike now.

"Pamela knows when she sees me break out a map and some index cards (to write directions) that I'll be gone the next day riding," he said.

Gonzalez says he loves to explore the roads criss-crossing the north Georgia mountains and into Tennessee.

"I usually have a plan in mind," he said. "I love stopping in little places and finding out where they serve the best banana pudding in town. People don't know who I am. It's some kind of beautiful up there."

Gonzalez's personality has been described as laid back and friendly, and his buddy Pendleton agrees.

"Fredi's the same with every type person," said Pendleton. "It doesn't matter who they are. He's friendly and treats them with respect, and I swear he knows someone in every major league city! He's like the mayor!"

That's an attribute Gonzalez said he saw in Cox.

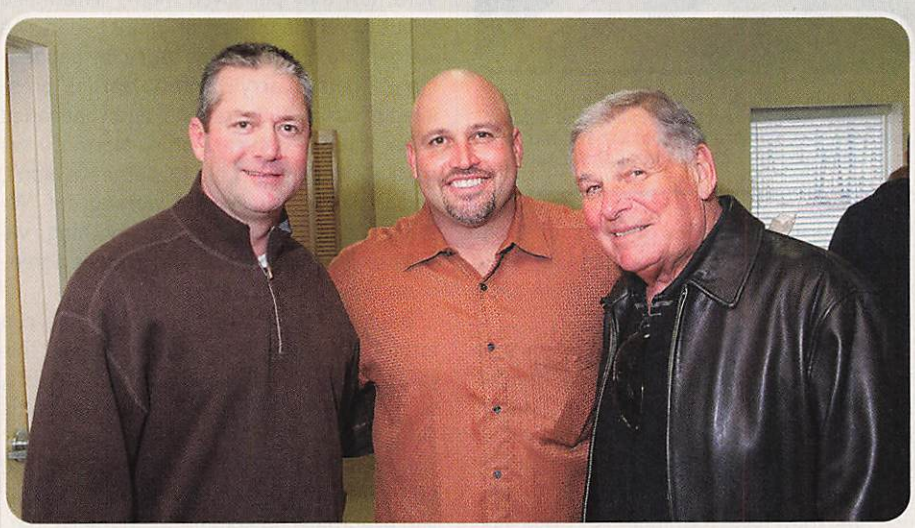
"He could go out to dinner with the Queen of England one night and a tugboat pilot the next and wouldn't treat them any differently," said Gonzalez.

It's also something he saw in his dad.

"My dad believes in fighting for the weak, standing up for the little guy," he said. "My mom was the caring part of the equation, and those are the core values that I can't ever get away from."

Tosca said Braves players and fans are in for a treat with Gonzalez as their manager.

"He's a guy that is comfortable in his own skin," said Tosca. "He has so much respect for Bobby and what he did here, but he's not intimidated by it either. He's his own man. And he's a good man."



SPECIAL

Pitching coach Roger McDowell (L) poses with his new and former bosses - Fredi Gonzalez and Bobby Cox.

BOBBY COX FANS!
SAVE THE DATE!
FEBRUARY 5, 2011

BOBBY AND PAM COX will be the honored guests at the Braves 400 Fan Club's annual winter banquet at 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, February 5, 2011 at the Georgia World Congress Center.

Save the Date and make plans to attend the "Gameboree" by signing up now at www.braves400.org.

Pricing for the event:

	Members	Non-Members
Before January 10	$75	$90
After January 10	$80	$95

Braves 400 FAN CLUB

Braves 400 Fan Club membership provides VIP access to:

- Players, coaches and management at club luncheons and activities
- Tickets through the exclusive fan club ticket exchange
- Advance post-season tickets before they go on sale to the general public

Join on-line today at www.braves400.org

Call the Braves 400 Fan Club Hotline 770-416-4539 for more benefits on fan club membership.

Or send a $25 check to Braves 400 Fan Club P O Box 7689, Atlanta Ga 30309

INSTANT POWER

Acquisition Of 30-Homer Man Dan Uggla Provides The Lineup Just What It Needs

BY GARY CARUSO

THE BRAVES haven't had a 30-home run hitter since 2006 - but they've got one now.

Making the first major trade of the off-season, Frank Wren acquired Silver Slugger and All-Star second baseman Dan Uggla - previously a Braves nemesis - from the Florida Marlins in exchange for Omar Infante and Mike Dunn on Nov. 16 at the General Managers Meetings at Disney World in Orlando.

Uggla, age 30, is coming off his best season in which he established career highs in batting average (.287), home runs (33) and RBIs (105) en route to his first Silver Slugger as the best-hitting second baseman in the National League. He was fifth in the league in both home runs and RBIs.

"We're excited," Wren said during a conference call with media shortly after the deal. "As we went into the off-season, our focus was on finding a big right-handed hitter for the middle of our lineup. When we came out of our organizational meetings, he (Uggla) was number-one on our list for a lot of reasons.

"I talked with Chipper (Jones) and (Brian) McCann and both managers - new and old, Fredi Gonzalez and Bobby Cox, and they're all ecstatic. McCann said you can never have enough guys like Uggla who go out and play hard every day."

Plus, the Braves don't have to pitch to Uggla. In 45 career games at Turner Field, he's hitting .354 with 12 home runs!

In just five seasons in the majors, Uggla has hit 154 home runs, an average of 31 per year. McCann led the Braves in home runs this past season with 21 when the entire team hit just 139 to rank 11th in the league. Atlanta also finished 10th in total bases (2,190) and slugging percentage (.401).

McCann also led the team in home runs in 2009 with 21 and in '08 with 23. Chipper led with 29 in '07. Andruw Jones led the club with 41 in 2006.

An All-Star in 2006 and 2008, Uggla is listed at 5-foot-11, 205 pounds. He was drafted in the 11th round in 2001 out of the University of Memphis. The Marlins acquired him from the Diamondbacks as a Rule 5 draft pick after Arizona left him unprotected in 2005. He's eligible for arbitration and can become a free agent after next season.

"He's our second baseman," Wren said when asked if Uggla would play his regular position or be moved to left field. "Martin (Prado), who primarily plays left field in winter ball - but not this year - will play left or, depending on how Chipper responds, will play third base if Chipper isn't ready or can't play.

"This gives us three significant right-handed bats in the lineup - Prado, Uggla and Alex Gonzalez (23 home runs last year but only 6 as a Brave). It really changes the dynamics of our lineup."

Wren said Uggla was in Mexico and might not even have known about the trade yet.

"We haven't talked yet, but with this being the last year of arbitration, it's appropriate for both sides to see what each other is all about and talk about the future. Suffice to say we would like to keep him long term. At the same time, he makes us a lot better today."

The Marlins had hoped to do that, as well, but could not reach agreement with Uggla on a long-term deal, resulting in the trade.

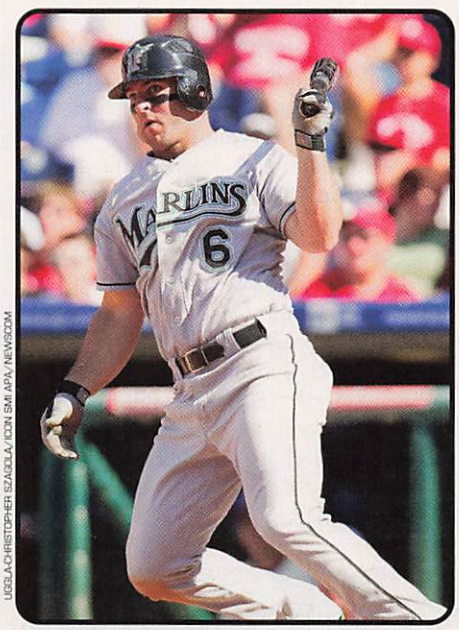
"We exchanged some names with the Marlins 10 or 12 days ago, but we weren't sure how they perceived them," Wren said about when the pursuit of Uggla began. "As we got into our meetings today, by happenstance, Larry (Larry Beinfest, Marlins' president of baseball operations) and I happened to be sitting next to each other. Normally, we have assigned seats, but this time we didn't, and that's just the way it worked out. We started talking, and by late morning, we were exchanging names and in basic agreement on what the deal would be."

Besides the fact that Uggla's home run total easily would have led the Braves this year, he also would have led them in RBIs, slugging percentage and OPS (on base plus slugging).

Infante had a career year, making the All-Star team for the first time in his career and eventually finishing third in the NL batting race (.321). Like Uggla, he will be eligible for free agency in a year.

DAN UGGLA'S CAREER RECORD

YEAR	TEAM	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	AVG	OBP	SLG
2006	Florida	154	611	105	172	26	7	27	90	48	123	.282	.339	.480
2007	Florida	159	632	113	155	49	3	31	88	68	167	.245	.326	.479
2008	Florida	146	531	97	138	37	1	32	92	77	171	.260	.360	.514
2009	Florida	158	564	84	137	27	1	31	90	92	150	.243	.354	.459
2010	Florida	159	589	100	169	31	0	33	105	78	149	.287	.369	.508
MAJOR TOTALS		776	2,927	499	771	170	12	154	465	363	760	.263	.349	.488



UGGLA:CHRISTOPHER SZAGOLA/ICON SMI APA/NEWSCOM

Uggla, who leads all second basemen in home run since 2006 and averages 93 RBIs per season, has never been on the disabled list and has averaged playing in 155 games per season.

PAINTING THE CORNERS

BY JAY BUSBEE

A NEW HITTING THERAPIST IS IN

BRAVES FANS, meet Larry Parrish, your brand-new hitting coach. Since it's been almost 30 years since Parrish played a meaningful game in Georgia, some formal introductions are in order.

When the Braves hired Parrish to replace Terry Pendleton, who was reassigned to first base coach, two questions immediately dominated Braves websites. The first was, "Parrish, Parrish ... wasn't he the catcher for the Tigers?" (Nope. That was Lance Parrish. The two aren't related.)

Following that, the negative types - believe it or not, there are some out there - wondered, "Why did we hire a career .263 hitter to help the Braves improve at the plate?"

It's true, Parrish wasn't exactly Tony Gwynn with a bat. But let's dispense with that whole "playing success determines coaching success" nonsense. Not too long ago, the Braves had on their staff a guy who hit a paltry .225 in a season and a half of major league ball. Name of Cox. Perhaps you've heard of him.

No, Parrish may not be your basic household name - unless your household was in Montreal in the late '70s, that is - but he brings established coaching credentials, as well as the kind of look and demeanor that you get from spending a lifetime staring out of baseball dugouts.

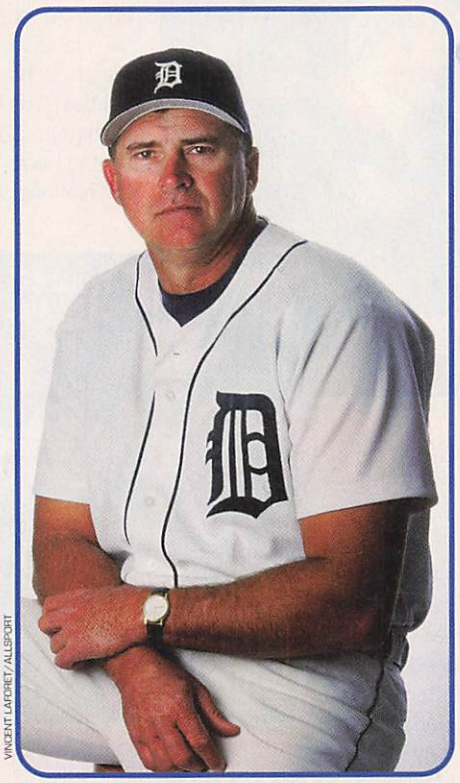
Here's his resume. Parrish broke into the majors as a 20-year-old with Montreal in 1974, and over the course of a 15-year career, played for the Expos, Rangers and Red Sox.

After two years in Japan, he began working his way through the managerial ranks. He managed champion squads in Niagara Falls (Class A, 1993) and Jacksonville (Double-A, 1996). And he took a turn at the big-league helm for the Tigers in 1998 and 1999.

Starting in 2003, Parrish managed the Toledo Mud Hens, the Tigers' Triple-A farm team. He left as the Mud Hens' all-time winningest manager, having led the team to Governor's Cup championships in 2005 and 2006. Along the way, he managed against the Braves' Richmond/Gwinnett teams.

"I was always impressed with the talent they had coming through every year," he recalled. "I always knew they knew what they were doing."

Still, Parrish seemed a Detroit mainstay - all told, he coached for the last 19 years in the Tigers organization - but Frank Wren and Fredi Gonzalez called with the proverbial offer he couldn't refuse.



VINCENT LAFORET / ALLSPORT

A careeer .263 hitter with 256 home runs, Larry Parrish managed and coached in the Detroit Tigers organization for the last 19 years.

"The interview was a surprise," Parrish said. "The Braves called and wanted to know if I'd be interested in the job. Of course, I was. Who wouldn't be?"

Part of what drew Wren and Gonzalez to Parrish was the fact that he had an eye on all elements of his clubs, even the guys taking cuts in the batting cage. Plus, as a player, Parrish stuck in the majors for 15 years, swinging a solid stick most of that time. He topped 20 homers in a season five times between 1979 and 1987.

Fortunately for Braves fans, Parrish isn't exactly getting a fixer-upper in Atlanta's lineup. The Braves led the league in on-base percentage and ranked sixth in batting average. Power-wise, the Braves could use a little work, having ranked in the lower half of the NL in home runs and slugging percentage. And that's where Parrish could come in handy, as he had a way with the longball during his playing days. He hit three grand slams in the week of July 4, 1982. And he also totaled four three-homer games, one of only eight players to pull off the feat in both leagues.

"I'm old school," he said. "A lot of guys are worried about on-base percentage. To me, hitters getting on base isn't as important as what they produce. We'll be counting on certain guys to set the table, and certain guys to hit the ball out of the ballpark."

Parrish will be getting the full spectrum of players, from barely-out-of-the-minors kids like Freddie Freeman, to a guy who's among the best pure hitters of all-time in Chipper Jones.

"With the kids, you lay the groundwork, find out what's working and what's not," Parrish said. "A lot of young guys don't even know what kind of player they need to be. They've gotten this far just on pure talent."

As for Chipper?

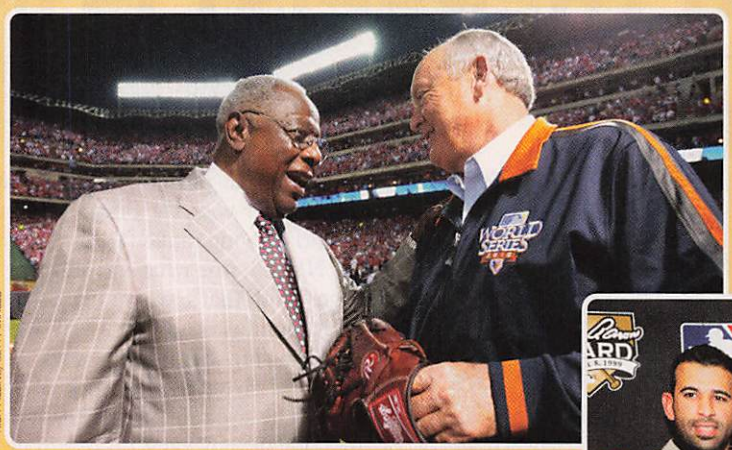
> "I'M OLD SCHOOL. A LOT OF GUYS ARE WORRIED ABOUT ON-BASE PERCENTAGE. TO ME, HITTERS GETTING ON BASE ISN'T AS IMPORTANT AS WHAT THEY PRODUCE."

"I'll be acting as a sounding board for him. He knows all he needs to know. I'll just be there to trade ideas about how to approach certain pitchers in certain situations."

And will Parrish, himself a big hunter, join Chipper in a little off-season hunting?

"Hopefully soon," he said with a laugh.

Atlanta had more clutch hits this year than any in recent memory, with a majors-leading 25 wins in their final at-bat. But that's one honor Braves fans are hoping Parrish will help erase. After all, if you're hitting well enough in the first eight innings, there's no need to hit big in the ninth. Make it happen, Larry!

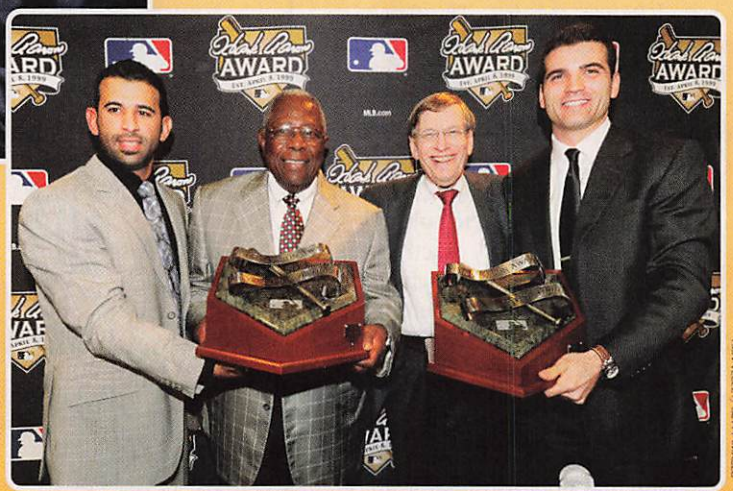


RICH PILLING/GETTY IMAGES

HANK'S AWARD

THE 12TH ANNUAL HANK AARON AWARDS were presented to Toronto Blue Jays outfielder/third baseman Jose Bautista and Cincinnati Reds first baseman Joey Votto prior to Game 4 of the World Series Oct. 31 at Rangers Ballpark in Arlington, Tex. Introduced in 1999, the award goes to the most-outstanding hitter in each league as determined by vote of a panel of Hall of Fame players (70 percent), including Aaron, Tony Gwynn, Harmon Killebrew, Willie McCovey, Paul Molitor, Billy Williams and Robin Yount and fans (30 percent).

Bautista, 30, had a breakout year with the Jays, setting a franchise record for home runs in a season with 54. He also batted .260 with 124 RBIs, leading the majors in homers and finishing third in RBIs. Votto, 27, led the Reds to the NL Central title with 37 home runs. He batted .324 with 113 RBIs, and his .424 on-base percentage was the highest in the majors. Votto also led the National League with a .600 slugging percentage.



RON VESELY/GETTY IMAGES

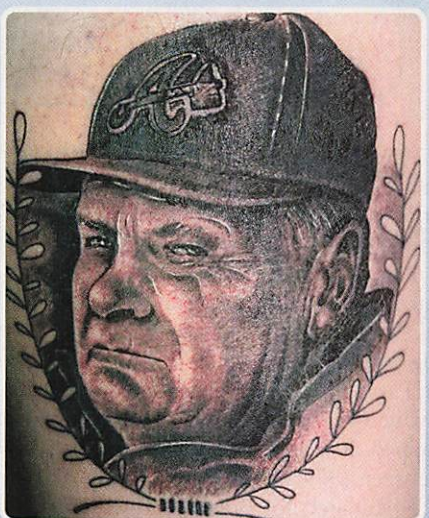
Two of the all-time greats, Hank Aaron and Nolan Ryan (above), visit at Rangers Ballpark during the World Series where Aaron and commissioner Bud Selig presented the awards to Jose Bautista (L) and Joey Votto (R).

TAT TRIBUTE

AS HIS LEGENDARY managing career came to an end, Bobby Cox received all sorts of tributes from the Braves, opposing teams, his players, fans and the media. They came in all descriptions, from a cruise and a car to portraits, cigars, cowboy boots, charitable donations and much more. But no one came up with anything quite as unique - and lasting - as Andy Pruett, a 23-year-old fan from the Atlanta suburb of Lawrenceville.

Pruett had a tattoo of Cox's likeness (R) added to his right thigh last summer.

An aspiring photographer and teacher who recently graduated from the Savannah College of Art & Design, Pruett said he paid about $300 for the work by Sergio Lindop, a tattoo artist in Flowery Branch, Ga. It was Pruett's 13th tattoo and took about two and a half hours to complete.



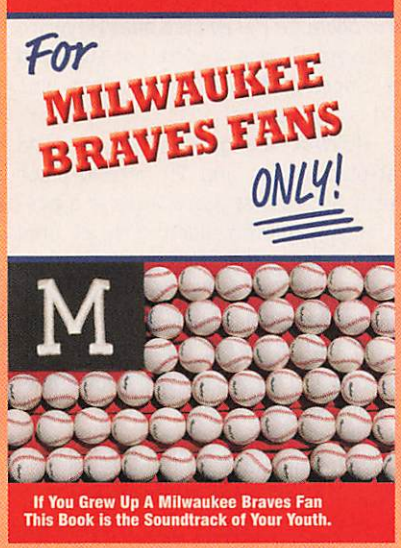
SPECIAL

"I'd been talking about it for two years or so," Pruett said. "When Bobby said this was his last year, I decided to finally go ahead with it."

Pruett is a long-time fan that grew up in Birmingham, Ala., and Lawrenceville during the Braves' incomparable era of success in the 1990s.

"Bobby has been in the organization so long, said Pruett. "I remember going to Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium with my dad when I was a kid. He's the only one who's been with the team every day that entire time. Baseball was always a fun part of my summers, a great part of growing up. It was a tradition to go and see the Braves. He's a good guy that no one has ever spoken a bad word about. I don't think anyone thought I'd go through with it, but I had to do it for Bobby."

BOOK NOOK



BRAVES FANS interested in connecting with the franchise's thrilling 13-year tenure in Milwaukee (1953-65) might want to check out a new book titled "For Milwaukee Braves Fans Only" by Tom Andrews and Rich Wolfe. It includes stories, memories and photos from one of the most-unique eras in professional sports history about the team that set Milwaukee afire, winning NL pennants in 1957 and '58 and the World Series in '57, and never finishing with a losing record. In the process, they introduced the concept of relocating franchises.

There are chapters in the book by broadcaster Milo Hamilton, Dr. Eddie Mathews Jr., the oldest son of the Hall of Fame third baseman, former Braves clubhouse boy Mickey Pavllovich, and many more, including ChopTalk editor/publisher Gary Caruso. It contains full transcripts of interviews with Lou (Lew) Burdette, Red Schoendienst, Hank Aaron, Frank Torre, Johnny Logan, Gene Conley, Chuck Tanner and other members of the '57 World Championship club. The 300-page book is available only at bravesfansonly.com/ for $14.95 plus $5 shipping/handling (include 5.6 percent sales tax for Wisconsin residents).

HOW DO THEY DO THAT?

MAKE A BASEBALL

WHEN THE HOME PLATE UMPIRE puts a new baseball in play at Turner Field, it completes a long journey that begins in Central America. All baseballs used in major league games are made in a Rawlings Sporting Goods factory located in Turrialba, Costa Rica, a small city about 40 miles east of the capital San Jose.

The manufacturing process starts with the baseball's rubber cushioned-cork center, which Rawlings refers to as "the pill."

"It has a center of cork/rubber and then two layers of rubber on the outside of that," said Kathy Smith, Rawlings' product category manager and senior product engineer. "That goes back to a patent which was written in 1925."

The "pills" are wrapped with three yarn windings that have 85 percent wool content, according to Smith. Each layer gets wrapped by a different winding machine. The three windings together comprise 330 yards of yarn. They are topped with one final layer made from a cotton and poly blend that resembles cotton thread.

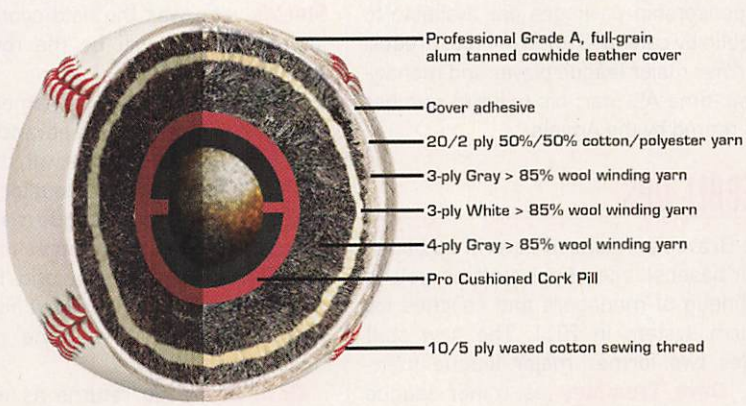
The balls are put in a barrel with adhesive, and tumbled to uniformly distribute this substance. The cowhide cover, which comes from a Rawlings tannery in Tullahoma, Tennessee, then is placed over the adhesive.

While most of the process is automated, 108 stitches still are hand-sewn into each baseball to form the red seams. Smith said this step takes their sewers about 14 to 17 minutes per ball. After that, the balls are rolled through a wooden trough that compresses them and pushes their seams down flat. A machine then stamps Major League Baseball's logo, trademark, and the commissioner's signature. Afterwards, they are packaged and shipped to the Rawlings warehouse in St. Louis.

The factory does quality control checks throughout the manufacturing process that consist of weighing and measuring. They also maintain optimal conditions for each step.

"You have to get the material to the right humidity and temperature when it's being made," said Smith. "Everything is very critical as far as humidity. We have to condition things for certain periods of time during the building process."

- STEVE FALL



DIFFERENCE OF OPINION

POLLYA DIANAT / ATLANTA BRAVES

Heyward finished fourth in the National League in walks and on-base percentage, and his .393 on-base percentage was the sixth-best in history for a player younger than 21.

JASON HEYWARD lost the "official" NL Rookie of the Year voting by the Baseball Writers Association of America (BBWAA) to Giants catcher **Buster Posey**. Apparently the players couldn't make up their minds about the award, because Posey also beat Heyward for the Players Choice Award, yet Heyward won The Sporting News' version that also was voted on by players.

In the BBWAA voting, Heyward received nine first-place votes and 20 second-place votes. Posey got 20 first-place votes of a possible 32. Heyward, who didn't turn 21 until August and is more than two years younger than Posey, hit .277 with 18 homers, 72 RBIs and a .393 on-base percentage in 142 games. He finished fourth in the NL - among all hitters - in walks (93) and on-base percentage (.393). His OBP was the sixth-highest ever for a player younger than 21 at the beginning of the season. He also led all qualifying rookies with an .849 on-base-plus-slugging percentage (OPS).

Jonny Venters received one third-place vote and tied for eighth with Pittsburgh outfielder **Jose Tabata**.

TOP SCOUT

Jim Fregosi, a Braves' advance scout for the last 10 years, as well as a special assistant to the GM and senior advisor on players, will receive the **George Genovese** Lifetime Achievement Award in Scouting at the Professional Baseball Scouts Foundation's 8th Annual "In The Spirit of the Game" Sports and Entertainment Spectacular gala on Saturday, Jan. 15, at the Hyatt Regency Century Plaza Hotel in Los Angeles. Tickets and sponsorship packages are available to the public by calling (310) 996-1188. Fregosi is a former major league player and manager. A six-time All-Star, his uniform number (11) is retired by the Angels.

BASEBALL OPS

The Braves announced several additions to their baseball operations staff, as well as their lineup of managers and coaches for the farm system in 2011. The new staff includes two former major league managers, **Dave Trembley** as minor league field coordinator and Lee Elia as a special assistant to **Frank Wren** and minor league and major league instructor.

Trembley was manager of the Baltimore Orioles from June 2007-June 2010 and also was a minor league manager for 21 seasons. He won two league titles and earned Manager of the Year awards in three leagues. Elia, who has been in pro ball for more than 50 years, was manager of the Chicago Cubs (1982-83) and the Phillies (1987-88) and has also served as a coach for the Phillies, Yankees, Blue Jays, Rays, Orioles and Seattle Mariners. **Tommy Shields**, who was the field coordinator the last four years, will be the roving infield instructor.

Bob Johnson also was named a special assistant to Wren and an advance scout. He spent the last four seasons with the Mets and has been a professional scout for 35 years.

The lineup of minor league managers and coaches includes **Jonathan Schuerholz**, the son of Braves president and former GM **John Schuerholz**, who will get his first managerial assignment with the rookie Gulf Coast League Braves.

Dave Brundage returns as manager at Gwinnett. **Rocket Wheeler** moves up a notch to manage at Double-A Mississippi, **Paul Runge** and **Randy Ingle** swap assignments, with Runge advancing from Danville to Rome, and Ingle going to Danville. The other new manager besides Schuerholz is **Luis Salazar** who will be with the Braves' advanced Class A affiliate in Lynchburg, Va. Salazar had a 13-year major league playing career (1980-92) as a third baseman/outfielder and most recently was hitting coach at Double-A Chattanooga in the Dodgers organization.

The coaches are: Gwinnett - **Marty Reed** (Pitching), **Jamie Dismuke** (Hitting); Mississippi - **Mike Alvarez** (P), **Garey Ingram** (H); Lynchburg - **Derek Botelho** (P), **Rick Albert** (H); Rome - **Derrick Lewis** (P), **Bobby Moore** (H); Danville - **Gabe Luckert** (P), **Carlos Mendez** (H); Gulf Coast - **Vladimir Nunez** (P), hitting coach to be determined.

PLAYER MOVES

The Braves agreed to terms with right-handed reliever **Scott Proctor** on a one-year contract, thus avoiding salary arbitration. Proctor, 33, is working his way back from Tommy John surgery in 2009. He has six seasons of big league experience (16-10, 4.46 in 268 games) and appeared in six

games for Atlanta late last year.

The club also announced they exercised contract options on infielders **Alex Gonzalez** and **Omar Infante**, but they declined to tender 2011 contracts to outfielder **Rick Ankiel** and right-handed pitcher **Kyle Farnsworth**, making them free agents. **Melky Cabrera** and **Takashi Saito** were released. The Braves have five arbitration-eligible players who are unsigned for 2011 – **Matt Diaz**, **Martin Prado**, **Jair Jurrjens**, **Peter Moylan** and **Eric O'Flaherty**. **Kenshin Kawakami**, who has one year remaining on his contract, cleared waivers and was outrighted to Double-A Mississippi.

Right-handed pitcher **Jairo Asencio** also was reinstated to the 40-man roster, and catcher **J.C. Boscan** was removed from it. The Braves purchased the contracts of minor league right-handed pitchers **Juan Abreu** and **Erik Cordier**, adding them to the 40-man roster.

Abreu, 25, appeared in a 47 games (all relief) between advanced-A Myrtle Beach and Double-A Mississippi last season. He was 4-2 with a 4.35 ERA and 12 saves. Cordier, 24, appeared in 27 games (23 starts) between Mississippi and Triple-A Gwinnett last season. He was 12-8 with a 3.82 ERA.

NEW HANDYMAN

The Braves picked up utilityman **Joe Mather**, 28, off waivers from the Cardinals Nov. 3. He played in 36 games for the Cardinals last season and hit .217 (13-for-60) with four doubles and three RBIs. He is a right-handed hitting infielder/outfielder. In 91 games with the Memphis Redbirds, Mather was 92-for-335 (.275) with 10 home runs and 46 RBIs. He can play both corner infield and outfield positions. In 10 minor league seasons, he has compiled a .255 batting average with 117 home runs and 439 RBIs.

AWARDS LEDGER

Tim Hudson won two more NL Comeback Player of the Year honors after earlier receiving it from beat writers at MLB.com. He received the Players Choice Award version, as well as the same honor from The Sporting News. Both were voted on by the players. **Brian McCann** and **Martin Prado**, members of the NL All-Star team this year, were selected to The Sporting News NL All-Star team by a vote of major league general managers.

FRANK WREN
GENERAL MANAGER

WE'RE ALREADY MAKING MOVES TO PREP FOR 2011

I'M ON MY WAY to the General Managers Meetings in Orlando. I'll go back to Orlando for the Winter Meetings this month.

Our primary focus is to try to hold onto our pitching, which has become our strength, and add some offense. I think we have some flexibility where people play, so we can add that offense at different positions, depending on who we can acquire.

There's usually not a lot of trading at the GM meetings, but we hope to establish a lot of groundwork for when we go back to the Winter Meetings.

We released Takashi Saito because that's standard in the contracts of Asian players since they don't have enough service time to become free agents. And since we knew we weren't bringing back Melky Cabrera, we released him to open a spot on the roster for a younger guy.

We re-signed (reliever) Scott Proctor, because at the end of the season, Bobby (Cox) and Roger (McDowell) felt he made big strides. His stuff was much better, and he'll come back a completely healthy pitcher in spring training and give us some bullpen experience.

We picked up Joe Mather off waivers from the Cardinals. He has the ability to make our club and play first or third and the outfield corners. He's big and strong and can hit the ball out of the park. He's another very versatile guy, sort of a bigger version of Omar Infante.

Fredi (Gonzalez) saw him a lot in spring training the last few years, because the Cardinals and Marlins share the same facility. He thinks it's worth bringing him in, especially since he missed time with a wrist injury and could be ready to bounce back to be the player he was a couple of years ago.

> "OUR PRIMARY FOCUS IS TO TRY TO HOLD ONTO OUR PITCHING, WHICH HAS BECOME OUR STRENGTH, AND ADD SOME OFFENSE."

We made a procedural move to take Kenshin Kawakami off the roster so we could protect a younger guy. We've had discussions with him about his role, and there's also been interest from teams in Japan.

Carlos Tosca is our new bench coach. He's got a close relationship with Fredi, and he also managed for us at Triple A in 2002 before going with Fredi in Florida.

We felt it was time for a change with the hitting coach, and Larry Parrish is someone that was recommended a lot over the last couple of years. He has a sound foundation and good knowledge of hitting, and once we interviewed him, it was apparent he has a lot of passion for teaching.

In TP's case (Terry Pendleton), this (moving to first base coach) gives him a bigger voice in the way the game is played. Sometimes a guy can get pigeonholed as a hitting coach. He'll oversee infield instruction and baserunning and will be able to instruct and speak to a broader section of the game.

I didn't think Jair Jurrjens was going to have surgery on his knee, but when he got back to Atlanta from Florida, it was bothering him enough that they decided to go ahead and do it. He should be fine for spring training.

Chipper had his knee checked last week, and he's making really positive progress, as expected. They turned him loose to do some hitting, and he'll be jogging shortly.

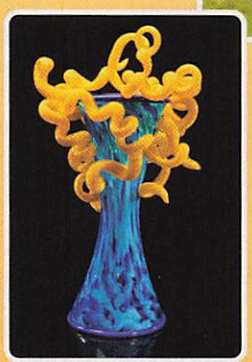
Martin Prado (hip/oblique) is still a couple of weeks from rehab, which will start December 1. Kris Medlen (elbow) is progressing well but still has a long way to go.

Freddie Freeman had a thumb injury in the fall league, but nothing serious. He's in Atlanta doing rehab and physical therapy for a couple of weeks.

HUDDY'S HUTCH

TIM HUDSON capped a distinguished off-season that featured several National League Comeback Player of the Year awards by gaining a recognition held by no other Braves player in history (Joe Torre won in 1971 with St. Louis and Sid Bream won with Pittsburgh in 1990). Hudson was named winner of the 46th annual Hutch Award, one of the most-esteemed and longest-running honors in baseball history.

The award is named after the late **Fred Hutchinson**, a former pitcher and manager who is best remembered for managing the Cincinnati Reds from 1959-64 and winning the 1961 NL pennant. He was stricken by fatal lung cancer at the height of his managerial success at age 45.



The Hutch Award is given to the major league player who best exemplifies the honor, courage and dedication of Hutchinson, both on and off the field. It will be presented to Hudson at Seattle's Safeco Field during a Jan. 26 luncheon that raises funds for early cancer detection research at the Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, founded by Hutchinson's brother, **Bill**, a prominent Seattle surgeon. For more information or to register for the luncheon, visit fhcrc.org/hutchaward.

Hudson, of course, underwent reconstructive surgery on his right elbow in August 2008, but returned to dominating All-Star form in 2010 (17-9, 2.83). Off the field, Hudson has long demonstrated a heart for children living with a life-altering or terminal disease.

The Hudson Family Foundation, launched in 2009 by Hudson and his wife, **Kim**, helps kids and their families ease the financial burdens of critical illnesses. The Hudsons support the Make-A-Wish Foundation, helping fulfill the wishes of critically ill children by hosting their visits to Turner Field and chairing major fundraisers. In addition, the Hudsons partner with the Moyer Foundation to expand the reach of Camp Erin, a bereavement camp for children age 6-17 who have experienced the death of a loved one.

POLIYA DIANAT/ ATLANTA BRAVES

Tim Hudson is the first Brave to win the Hutch Award in its 45-year history and will be honored Jan. 26 at a luncheon in Seattle.

When Hudson visits Seattle to receive the Hutch Award, he will visit the Hutch School, an accredited education program for cancer patients and young family members of patients. Joining him will be Hall of Famer **Joe Morgan**, who will be the keynote speaker at the Hutch Award Luncheon.

The Hutch Award recipient is selected annually through a vote of all surviving former award winners. A total of 45 players have been honored since 1965, when **Mickey Mantle** accepted the inaugural award. Baseball Hall of Famers **Sandy Koufax**, **Carl Yastrzemski**, **Willie McCovey** and **Lou Brock** are among the past winners. More recently, **Jamie Moyer**, **Craig Biggio**, **Mike Sweeney**, **Jon Lester** and **Mark Teahen** have joined their ranks.

IT WON'T BE LONG!

The Braves' home spring schedule at ESPN's Wide World of Sports includes games against some of baseball's best and most-popular teams, including the Yankees, Red Sox, Phillies, Mets and Cardinals.

Braves pitchers and catchers are scheduled to report to ESPN's Wide World of Sports Feb. 14, with their first workout the next day. The rest of the players are due Feb. 18, with the first full-squad workout Feb. 19.

After two weeks of practice, the Braves play a 35-game exhibition schedule with 18 of those at Champion Stadium, highlighted by a Mar. 8 visit by the Yankees, and a Mar. 16 date with the Red Sox. The Phillies, playoff regulars the past four seasons, visit Mar. 27.

The 2011 Grapefruit League schedule begins Feb. 26 against the Mets at Port St. Lucie.

Individual game tickets for the Braves' home spring training season go on sale Saturday, Jan. 8, at 10 a.m. through Ticketmaster (800-745-3000 and ticketmaster.com) and at the ESPN Wide World of Sports complex box office.

For the complete schedule, as well as additional ticket information, see pages 52-53.

BOBBY'S NIGHT

The Braves 400 Fan Club will honor **Bobby Cox** and his wife, **Pam**, at its annual winter banquet Saturday, Feb. 5, at the Georgia World Congress Center. The event begins at 5 p.m. and is open to all fans, whether they are members of the club or not. Tickets purchased before Jan. 10 are $75 for 400 Club members and $90 for non-members. After Jan. 10, they are $80 for members and $95 for non-members. Visit braves400.org or call (770) 416-4539 to purchase tickets or obtain more information. The banquet is always an off-season highlight for Braves fans. The Braves' top farm

system players receive awards, and other events include a silent auction.

BOBBY ON THE ROAD

Bobby Cox will be the featured speaker at the seventh annual Hot Stove Banquet & Silent Auction on Jan. 28 at the Holliday Alumni Center on The Citadel campus in Charleston, S.C. The event is an annual collaboration between the Charleston RiverDogs and The Citadel. In addition to the banquet, a live auction will be held with proceeds going to The Citadel and to MUSC's Storm Eye Institute, the RiverDogs' primary charity. The reception begins at 6 p.m. with the dinner at 7 o'clock. Tickets are $65 per person and include dinner, beverages and admission to the live auction. For individual tickets and information, contact the RiverDogs at (843) 577-3647. Tickets may also be purchased at riverdogs.com.

BALLS & STRIKES

- Oakland hired **Gerald Perry** (1B/OF, 1983-89) as batting coach.
- **Deion Sanders** (OF, 1991-94) was inducted into the Atlanta Falcons' Ring of Honor Nov. 11. He is just the eighth member voted in by a media selection committee. The ceremony took place at halftime of the nationally-televised game between the Falcons and Ravens at the Georgia Dome.
- Milwaukee Braves broadcaster **Bob Uecker** (C, 1962-63, '67) underwent a second successful heart surgery of the year on Oct. 19. He returned home eight days later and recovery was expected to take eight weeks.
- The Phillies signed free agent infielder **Pete Orr** (INF/OF, 2005-07), who played with the Washington Nationals' Triple-A team last year.
- **Brian Jordan** (OF, 1999-2001, '05-06) was one of the authors ("I Told You I Can Play") that participated in the Savannah Children's Book Festival that was attended by more than 30,000 people Nov. 13.
- **Fredi Gonzalez** and **Roger McDowell** played in Dodgers pitching coach **Rick Honeycutt**'s annual youth benefit charity golf tournament Oct. 26 at Battlefield Golf Club in Ringgold, Ga.

FREDI GONZALEZ

MANAGER

IT'S NOT MY MANNER TO YELL AND SCREAM

THERE'S BOUND TO BE a continuation in the way I run things, because Bobby (Cox) gave me a lot of my baseball values. Our core values are the same, so I'm not going to come in and overhaul everything.

But at the same time, there's no way it can be the same. Stuff I like or that I believe in will be incorporated. For example, we're going to start a daily stretch during the season, as a team. We'll have a 15- to 20-minute team stretch each day before batting practice.

Those 20 minutes are a good time for me and my coaches to touch base with individual guys about what's going on with them. I've always thought it was the most fun part of batting practice anyway. Guys usually get some good-natured ribbing in. It's not big in the grand scheme of things, but it's something I like.

I'll run spring training pretty much the same way it's been run. Come to work, get your work done, play games, and go home. As long as everyone's doing 100 percent, we'll get what we need to get done and we can all go home.

I do want to keep the early throwing program at Turner Field for our pitchers. I think it gives everyone a nice head start on spring training.

Everything we do, whether it's a carryover or new, has to have a purpose, and the purpose is to build the team. I've told my coaches: You have a job to do and you were hired because you know how to do it. So just go for it.

I told (hitting coach) Larry Parrish, "If you have to make guys stand on their heads in the batting cage to get them to hit, do it." Just be ready to work, be organized and on time. If you have to sit in the batting cages from 2 o'clock until the last guy wants to hit, that's what we're going to do. Be available to the players. These are your babies - now help them grow.

> "I'M NOT INTIMIDATED BY THE TRANSITION. I'M JUST STEPPING IN AND CONTINUING WHAT HE DID."

My biggest thing is communication. I want to know what's going on with guys. I don't need any surprises. Communication and followup is so important to me.

Players know how I'm going to react, day in and day out. I'm not a guy who's throwing up his hands, tossing his cap, yelling and screaming in the dugout. I'm not a distraction. If a guy gives up a home run to end the game, I'll be right there to pat him on the back and say, "You'll get them next time." Now if he walks in the winning run, I'll probably have a different reaction!

(Bench coach) Carlos Tosca is one of the most well-rounded coaches I've ever been around. He knows defense, hitting, strategy, pitching. He has a wealth of knowledge. I consider him part-time baseball man, philosopher and psychologist.

When I need him to talk to someone, I have confidence in him. It's important that he isn't a "yes" man. I need someone who's going to give me an honest answer.

The team I inherited is solid. We have a strong rotation and bullpen, too. I expect that we'll look for some veteran arms to strengthen the 'pen. I think we'll be pretty active at the Winter Meetings.

I haven't moved into the manager's office yet, and I don't have a time frame for that. When I do, it will just be a couple of boxes, maybe a couple of pictures. Bobby's got 25 years' worth of stuff in there!

I'm not intimidated by the transition. I'm just stepping in and continuing what he did. I don't think of being the manager of the Braves as replacing Bobby. There's going to be someone after me someday, but I hope that's a long time from now.

PLAYING PEPPER

CHIPPER JONES

ATLANTA BRAVES

INTERVIEW BY
PATTY RASMUSSEN

Chipper says that if he wasn't playing so well at the time of his injury, he might have retired on the spot.

CHOPTALK: How's rehab going? What stage are you at? Describe a typical day at this point.

CHIPPER JONES: It's going well, I think. I have bad days every once in a while, but my overall feeling is that I'm stronger and getting to the point where the knee can support me, actively, again. I'm just waiting for them to tell me I can get in the cage and hit. I've taken some dry swings, but nothing else. At this stage, I'm lifting weights with my knee, which is something I wasn't doing when we were playing. Now it's to the point that I'm doing leg presses and really starting to expand, to find out what I'm capable of. The great thing is that I can feel it getting stronger every time I work out. I'm 10 times better than I was at the end of the season. When I'm in Atlanta or (at the ranch) in Texas I work out every day, because I have weight rooms in both those places. But when I'm in Kansas or Oklahoma (Chipper regularly hunts in both states), I can't work out every day, and I feel the difference. My knee definitely feels better when I've worked out.

CT: When will you know how successful surgery was and how much you'll be capable of contributing?

CHIPPER: Technically speaking, the surgery was a success and I'll be able to play baseball. But it might be at the A-Ball speed. (Laughs) I won't know how much I can contribute until I get out there and can swing the bat and move around. I'm getting very close to the point where I'll be able to run. There's always a bit of rust before we all get started at spring training, but I believe I'll need a full spring training to really gauge what I can do. The last thing I want to do is embarrass myself or the organization, so if I'm not able to move the way I think I should at third, if I'm not doing other things as I should, I'll take more time to judge.

CT: When you were injured, Bobby Cox and Frank Wren said you were starting to swing the bat as well as you had in a long time. Do you agree?

CHIPPER: There's no doubt. There's also no doubt that if I had gotten this injury a month earlier, in the place I was in mentally, it probably would have sent me over the edge.

CT: Would you have retired immediately?

CHIPPER: I think I probably would have retired. And someone would have talked me out of it. (Laughs) I'm glad it happened when I was swinging the bat really well, when I was still playing well defensively, offensively. There wasn't a single part of my game that I wasn't feeling good about when I got hurt. I know I don't want the last image of me being curled up on the ground behind third base in Houston.

CT: Have you watched video of the injury? What did you think of the play you made?

CHIPPER: I have seen the video, but little of it shows the actual injury because the camera was following the ball. I don't think it caught me hitting the ground. The thing is a lot of people thought the injury occurred when I landed, but I'm 99 percent sure I did it when I took off. It was a close game and we ended up winning on (Brooks) Conrad's home run, and the throw I made helped. The funny thing is that everybody loves working on that type of play in batting practice, where you catch, plant, and dump the ball. It's the type of play that guys like Derek Jeter and Brooks Robinson made their names on, and I always enjoyed having the chance to show an old guy like me could do it, too.

CT: How did this injury, the surgery and the rehab compare with the one in 1994 (also left ACL tear)?

CHIPPER: There's no comparison. They're not in the same hemisphere. I was at the stadium the next day (after surgery) on crutches. In '94, I was in bed for three weeks and on painkillers. I took one painkiller the first night after this recent surgery. I was able to bend my knee to 90 degrees within the first 48 hours, and it only took 20 to 30 seconds. In '94, it took 20 excruciating minutes, and my head was throbbing afterward from the exertion.

CT: Are you certain you'll be able to play?

CHIPPER: I have days when I think there's no way I'll be ready, and then I have four or five days when I feel like I'll be Albert Pujols! I just don't know. I'm going to do everything I can to play again. It's funny. I've been concerned about something from day one of this rehab. The first time this happened, I was told it would take 10 to 11 months to rehab, and this time I've been told it will take five to six months. So I wonder, what accounts for the difference? Were they telling me the longer time to keep a 22-year-old from pushing himself too

> "I WON'T KNOW HOW MUCH I CAN CONTRIBUTE UNTIL I GET OUT THERE AND CAN SWING THE BAT AND MOVE AROUND."

hard? I'm sure it's just the things we've talked about, the medical advances, have cut the time shorter.

CT: Have you thought about what you'd do if you can't play?

CHIPPER: Don't allow myself to think that way. I can't really. All I can do is work as hard as possible to be ready to help our team, whether it's in April, May or June. I just don't know. I do know that I'm excited about our club and organization and where it's headed. I know I want to go out a winner. And we were close, so close to advancing in the playoffs. Who knows what might have happened had Martin (Prado) stayed healthy, if I had stayed healthy? Look, I got hurt playing baseball against some of the best in the game. This team began to know what it felt like coming to the ballpark expecting to win, not just hoping to win, and that's a good feeling. I really believe anything can happen in October when you catch teams at the right time. We had really good pitching keeping us in close games. There were plays that would have been made. That said, we would have to go through the Phillies pitching, and that's a tough task.

CT: Did you apply for the job as hitting coach?

CHIPPER: (Laughs) When I broached the subject with Frank (Wren) I told him I'd need a little raise to take that job. (Laughs) I'm kidding. I will say this about it - when I talked to Frank about Larry Parrish, he was as jacked up to get him as any off-season acquisition we've talked about. I don't know (Parrish) at all, but I've heard about him and I think change is good for us. I'm glad TP (Terry Pendleton) is still in the fold, albeit in a different role. He'll still offer insight. That gives us two good guys on the bench who know a lot about hitting.

CT: Three if you include yourself. I've seen you talking to Brian McCann for an hour about hitting.

CHIPPER: Sometimes it can be easier to take constructive criticism from someone you're in the foxhole with. These guys come up to the major leagues with great tools and understanding about hitting, but I harp on the mental aspect of hitting and will continue to do so.

CT: What do you think of the changes - Fredi Gonzalez as manager and Carlos Tosca and Parrish as coaches?

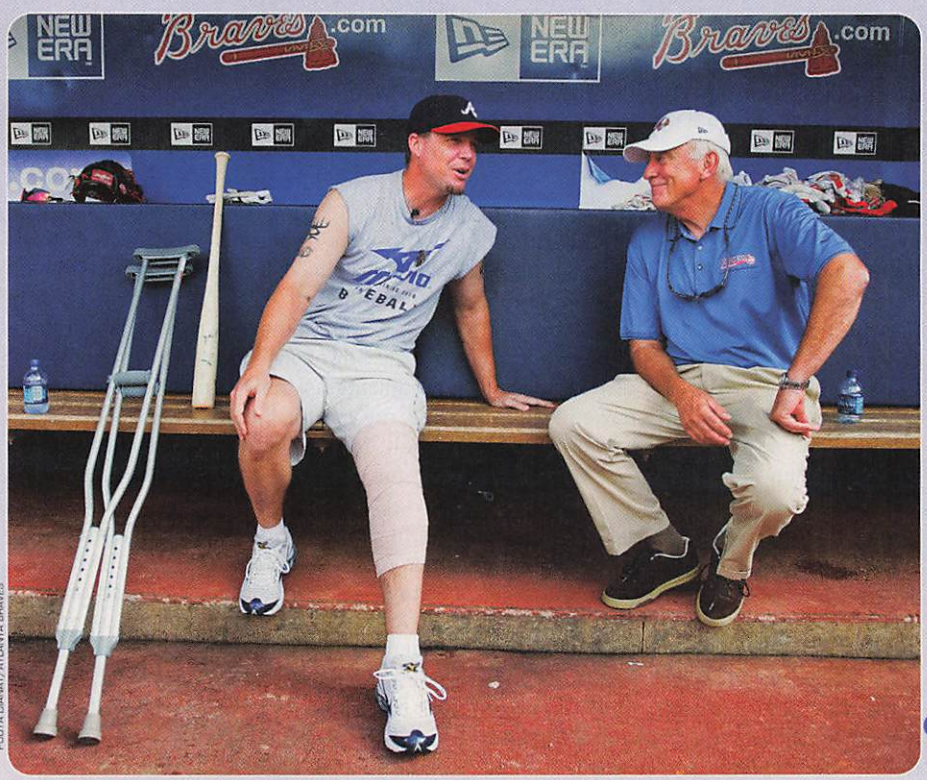
> "THERE WASN'T A SINGLE PART OF MY GAME THAT I WASN'T FEELING GOOD ABOUT WHEN I GOT HURT."

CHIPPER: Fredi was definitely my first choice, and god knows I dropped enough hints! I don't think Frank could have made a better selection. Fredi's been here and knows how things work in the organization, so there's less of a shock to the system. I think that's what most guys wondered about. You know, at spring training will we come in and have to run a 6-minute mile? They do that in some camps. I think there will be a lot of continuity. I love (bench coach) Carlos Tosca and have admired him from a distance for years. It's good for our team to have a manager and bench coach that have worked together and have a good rapport. We've also kept some of our coaches. Brian Snitker is a really good third base coach. Eddie Perez is my favorite teammate of all-time, so it goes without saying how glad I am that he's still with us. Roger McDowell has done an outstanding job with our pitchers.

CT: How would you describe Fredi and the way you think he'll run the team? Any significant similarities and differences to Bobby?

CHIPPER: Fredi is the closest thing to Bobby we were going to get. I think the biggest similarity is that we'll still be able to talk to our manager. He's approachable. You know that you have that freedom to stick your head in his office and say, "Hey, I

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



POLLYA DIAMAT/ATLANTA BRAVES

Shortly after surgery, Chipper visits with Hall of Fame pitcher Phil Niekro in the Braves' dugout.

need a day." I think he'll give guys rest with the confidence that he's got good backup for the everyday players. He'll probably handle his lineup and bench the same (as Cox). I really hope they're planning to bring back Eric Hinske to offer some left-handed pop to the lineup. And bring back Brooks (Conrad) and Omar Infante to fill in where needed. I imagine they'll make a move or two for the outfield. But Fredi's going to do really well. He follows after Bobby's model as a players' manager, not a lot of rules, just play hard and do your work.

CT: What was it like for you to see Bobby's career ending? The ceremonies, the last regular-season game and the last playoff game? Did you have time to take it in or were you more focused on winning?

CHIPPER: It was, "Win, win, win" up until the last out of the last game, and then there was this immediate shift. Bobby walked downstairs, but everybody stayed in the dugout. Normally we would have followed him down there, gone to the clubhouse and left for the winter. But we were frozen there. The crowd immediately started chanting Bobby's name. Kudos to the Giants for standing out on the field to salute Bobby. It was a class act on their part and a class act on the part of our fans. The players stayed in the dugout because we wanted to give Bobby his proper farewell. Once we got in the clubhouse, it was a different matter. I haven't cried in a baseball uniform since I was 7 or 8 years old, but I cried that night. Bobby came in and couldn't get out 10 words he was so choked up. He just couldn't get the words out, and you know it comes from a kind of love and passion that you can't describe. When he walked out, everyone gave him a standing ovation. It was a very cool moment that I don't think any of the guys will ever forget.

CT: Did you have any one-on-one time with him afterward?

CHIPPER: No one-on-one time with him, but he did do something he had never done before and I think it was a tribute to how he felt about this particular team. There was a group of us, about 20 or so guys, who hung around for a long time after the game just talking about the season, telling stories, remembering moments. It was late, but Bobby came in and plopped down in one of the recliners and just shot the breeze for about an hour or so. It was probably 12:30 or 1 a.m. He never did that in all my time here, and for him to do that meant so much. The guys just ate it up. Brian McCann, David Ross, Peter Moylan were all there. It was really special.

CT: What do you think the first day of spring training will be like without him in uniform?

CHIPPER: I think the air of anticipation will override everything else, including not having Bobby as manager. This team knows it can compete, and they also know that having new blood isn't a bad thing. So there's a new manager to impress, new coaches and probably new teammates to impress. Bobby is going to be missed, but I'm sure his presence will be felt.

> "I HAVEN'T CRIED IN A BASEBALL UNIFORM SINCE I WAS 7 OR 8 YEARS OLD, BUT I CRIED THAT NIGHT."

CT: If you don't quite regain your movement at third base, would you consider playing first base all or part of the time, perhaps allowing Fredi to pick his spots for using Freddie Freeman?

CHIPPER: I'll always do anything I can to help this team win. I think the Braves have their mind made up on who their first baseman will be, and to be honest with you, Freddie is better over there than I would be. Especially the way he played in September. I know he didn't get a ton of hits, but his defense is good and he showed enough promise, hitting-wise, that they'd be crazy not to play him there.

CT: How's the family? Are you splitting your time between Texas and Atlanta?

CHIPPER: We're doing great and enjoying the off-season. (Wife) Sharon is awesome. Our boys are getting big and doing well in school and they know that's important at our house. They're excited about getting out to the ranch for the holidays to spend time with their Nana and Poppa (Chipper's mother and father). I'm not really splitting time. I went to the ranch a day or two after the season ended and stayed there four or five days. We'll head back out there for the holidays as a family. I'm very wrapped up in the Buck Commander television show and DVD series, so I'm traveling a good bit for that. By the end of this offseason, I will have been to Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, Illinois and Missouri. I was in Oklahoma for a while in October and walked a mile or two a day, climbed some deer stands, over ridges, and I was none the worse for wear. But as I said, I feel better when I'm able to actually work out the knee, so I make sure to stay on top of that in Atlanta or Texas.

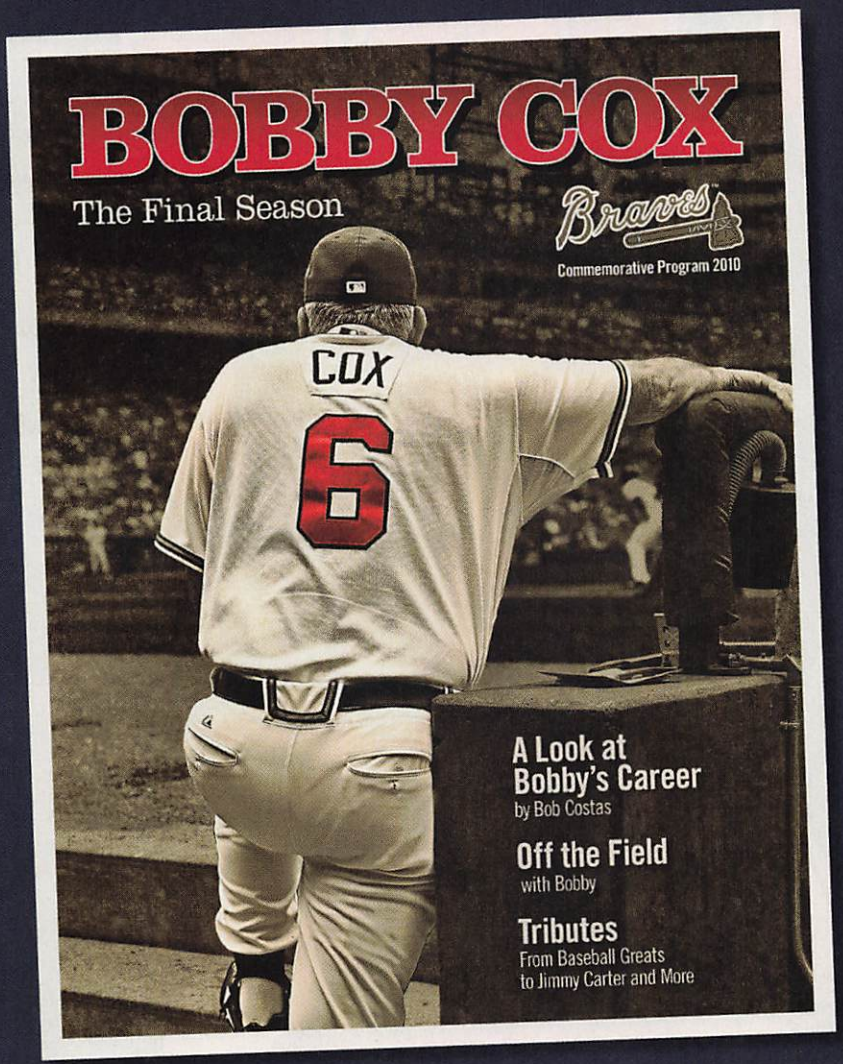
CT: When will you go to Florida?

CHIPPER: They allow injured players to go to camp when pitchers and catchers report, so I'm sure I'll get down there then. I'm usually there anyway, but generally I play a lot of golf at that time. This time I'll be focusing more on my rehab.

CT: The Chipper Jones Family Foundation golf tournament took place in early November. That's turned into quite an annual event. How many years has it taken place?

CHIPPER: This is our eighth year and it's great. I can't say enough about our sponsors. They are so loyal. This isn't your usual celebrity tournament. We only sell about 25 foursomes, so that it's not a super long day of golf, but the people who come know that we'll have a great time. We always have a cool silent auction with intriguing stuff that people really want to bid on, and we make a lot of money from it. It's my way of giving back to the people and organizations that mean the most to me and my family. We try to keep the event small, loyal and real, and make sure it's fun for everyone involved. We're not going to raise $4 or $5 million at our tournament, but we will raise half a million to give to our charities. We know it wouldn't happen without the guys who show up to play every year, without our sponsors, both the title sponsors and the smaller ones. We have a great location and couldn't be happier with Bear's Best. We see a lot of the same faces year after year, and that makes it special.

BOBBY COX
COMMEMORATIVE PROGRAM



- *Feature article by Bob Costas*
- *Bobby's life off the field*
- *Tributes to Bobby from former and current players and coaches as well as Elton John, Tony LaRussa and President Jimmy Carter*

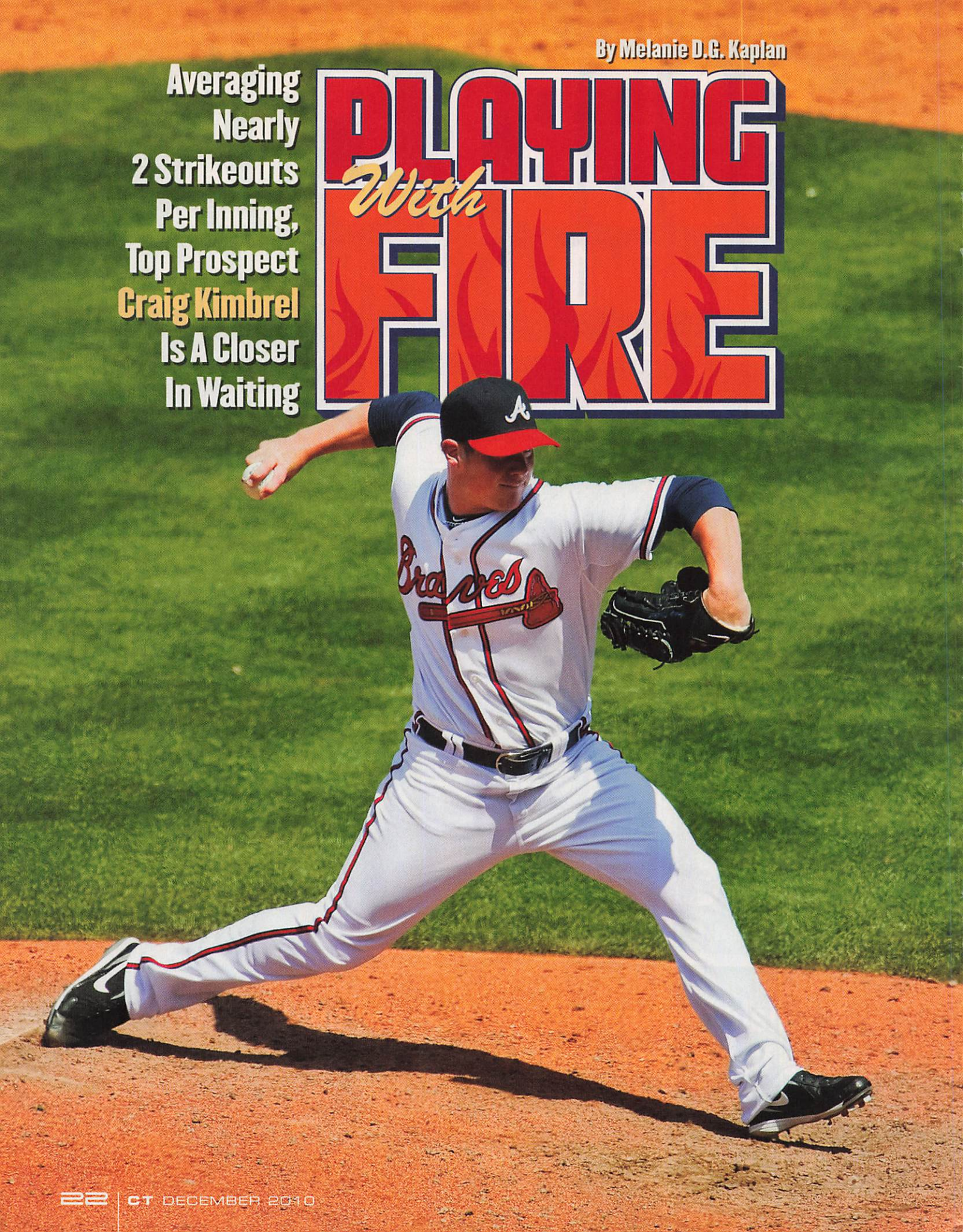
Celebrate Bobby Cox's 25th and final season as the Braves' Skipper

Available on braves.com or by calling 404.523.5854.
Be sure to pick up a piece of Braves history today!

By Melanie D.G. Kaplan

PLAYING *With* FIRE

Averaging Nearly 2 Strikeouts Per Inning, Top Prospect Craig Kimbrel Is A Closer In Waiting



Shortly after Craig Kimbrel graduated from Lee High School in Huntsville, Ala., he got a lucky break. Literally.

While working a construction job, two weeks before he was supposed to arrive at nearby Wallace State Community College for fall baseball practice, he dropped sheetrock on his left foot and broke several bones, including those in four of his toes.

Kimbrel called Randy Putman, Wallace State's long-time coach, and told him the bad news.

"Coach really did me a favor," Kimbrel says now, remembering the conversation. "He said, 'You'll still play for me.'"

Kimbrel arrived at fall practice on crutches, itching to throw. So he kneeled and started throwing, with a manager or trainer catching the ball.

"What he developed were the muscles in his lower back and his butt," Putman said. "He got to the point where he was throwing the ball farther off two knees than the guys were who were standing up. He did that every day."

Before long, Putman predicted that the 86-mile-per-hour pitches he witnessed when he was recruiting Kimbrel in high school would jump to the low 90s, and Kimbrel didn't disappoint. He was throwing 93 or 94 miles per hour, and when he started practicing on the soccer field, still kneeling, he would throw the ball from behind one goal to beyond the other.

Putman says all the scouts who had seen Kimbrel in high school started asking him, "What did you do for him to gain that velocity?"

Putman's reply was that he didn't do anything. It was the perseverance of a pitcher who - even before he broke his foot - was "tough as a pine nut."

Today, Putman has all his pitchers do some throwing from a kneeling position in the off-season and continues to see impressive results. He says there's no doubt in his mind that Kimbrel breaking his foot, and the training that ensued, is the best thing that could have happened to him.

And Kimbrel, who ditched his crutches by December of his freshman year and started Wallace State's first game of the season, is now one of the hottest up-and-coming relievers in baseball. He has only a scar running the length of his foot to remind him that things could have turned out differently with a less committed coach.

POLIYA DIANAT/ATLANTA BRAVES

Kimbrel grew up in Huntsville, the oldest of three sons. By the time he was 3 years old, he was throwing a baseball over the house.

"At the time, we didn't know that was special," said his mother, Sandy Kimbrel, a physical therapist.

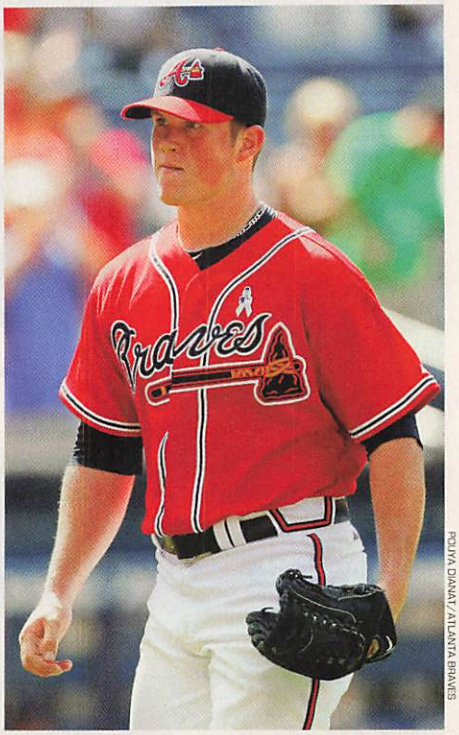
By age 4, Kimbrel was playing in Little League. By 5, his parents were calling him "Mr. Baseball." By 8, he was throwing the ball so hard his grandfather couldn't catch it.

The family lived in the Five Points neighborhood, two blocks from a baseball field. When the boys weren't doing their homework, they were at the field - after they started breaking too many windows by playing in the yard.

Their father, Mike, an electrician and avid motorcyclist, takes his Native American heritage (Delaware and Cherokee tribes) seriously. And the boys learned at a young age that their dad's mother - their grandmother Nancy Jones - is equally serious about baseball.

A former assembly line worker at the Chrysler factory, she would get off work mid-afternoon and bring sliced cantaloupe to the boys' Little League games. When Craig was 13, she bought him his first bat, which he slept with. She wasn't shy about yelling to the coaches when she disagreed with them during games. By the time Craig was in high school, she was known as "Coach Grandma." It was only fitting that the boys gave her a vanity license plate that said just that.

Lee High School head coach Butch Weaver, who is now in his 25th year at the school, says his first memory of Craig was when he was pitching as a freshman.



POLIYA DIANAT/ATLANTA BRAVES

When he was only a high school sophomore in Huntsville, Ala., Kimbrel told his baseball coach he intended to play for the Braves.

"He was throwing 77, 79, and he threw a two-hitter in a 50-inning JV game," Weaver said. "He has three pitches - fastball, curveball and changeup - and he used all of them as a freshman. People started to take notice how hard he could throw."

In 10th grade, Weaver remembers Kimbrel and his fellow pitcher, Buddy Boshers (now a pitcher in the Angels' organization), came into his office and told him they wanted to pitch for the Atlanta Braves.

"They said, 'We're going to make it to the big leagues, and we're gonna make you proud.'"

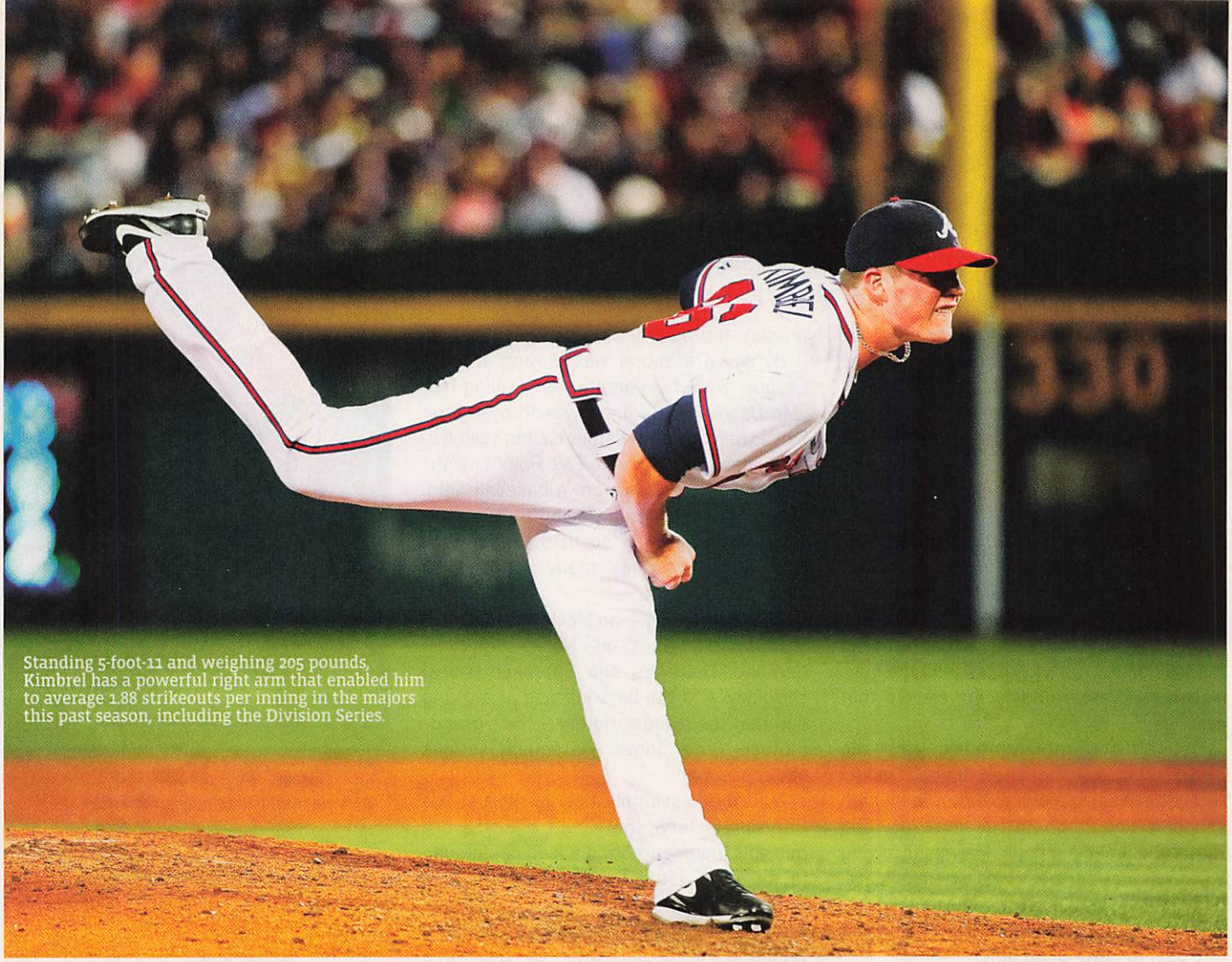
By his senior year, Kimbrel (who was also the school's backup quarterback) was pitching and playing shortstop and was recruited by Wallace State and the University of Alabama, Huntsville. Putman, who played in the minor leagues (San Diego and Kansas City), visited the Kimbrels at home.

"I loved the way he competed on the mound," he said. "A lot of guys don't really compete. When things are going bad, they don't get out there and roll up their sleeves and have the blue-collar work ethic. And he did. I loved that bulldog mentality."

"I loved the way he competed on the mound," Putnam said. "A lot of guys don't really compete. When things are going bad, they don't get out there and roll up their sleeves and have the blue-collar work ethic. And he did. I loved that bulldog mentality."

At Wallace State, Putman pushed Kimbrel - both on and off the field. He made sure his players went to class and had a backup career plan. Just before a state tournament in Kimbrel's freshman year,

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



Standing 5-foot-11 and weighing 205 pounds, Kimbrel has a powerful right arm that enabled him to average 1.88 strikeouts per inning in the majors this past season, including the Division Series.

POLIYA DIANAT/ATLANTA BRAVES

Putman pulled him aside.

"He said, 'You're going to be drafted, but I want you to stay,'" Kimbrel remembered.

In 2007, the Braves drafted Kimbrel in the 33rd round, but Putman knew he could do better - and earn more money - if he waited another year. Even before the draft, Kimbrel had decided he would take the coach's advice and return to school (despite Coach Grandma's pleads for him to take the Braves' offer).

His sophomore year, Kimbrel was hitting the upper 90s with his pitches. He earned an associates degree in applied science, and in June 2008, was selected by the Braves in the third round (96th overall) of the free agent draft. Not only had Kimbrel's dream come true, but he was ready for it.

"Randy definitely prepared me mentally," he said of his college coach. "[Going to the minors] was an easy transition."

His next dream: Making it to the majors before Bobby Cox retired.

For two years in the Braves farm system, Kimbrel practiced everything his coaches taught him. He understood that his strong arm would be worthless if he got too rattled or lost his composure. And he remembered, as his college pitching coach used to say, that he was his own best coach and could figure out what he needed to fix or tweak before hearing it from someone else.

And while he moved back and forth between the Braves' two Class-A affiliates, Rome and Myrtle Beach, often enough in two years to foil several family plans to visit,

"Once you get to this level, everyone has the physical abilities," Kimbrel said. "It's the mental that sets you apart."

he remained optimistic about reaching Turner Field.

In 2009, playing at both Class A stops and then Double-A Mississippi and Triple-A Gwinnett, Kimbrel recorded 103 strikeouts and 45 walks in 60 innings (49 relief appearances), earning the Phil Niekro Award for the Braves' top minor league pitcher. In 2010, he was called up to Atlanta for the first of four times on May 5, and made his first appearance two days later at Philadelphia when he struck out two in a scoreless inning. His first win followed two weeks later, May 20, after working a scoreless ninth inning against Cincinnati and watching Brooks Conrad hit a walkoff grand slam for a 10-9 victory. He was just shy of his 22nd birthday, one of the youngest players on the roster.

In Atlanta, Kimbrel became even more vigilant about his mental game and preparation, which included keeping a good routine, not working out so much that he would be sore the next day, and understanding what he had to do to help the team, even if it wasn't best for him personally. When asked about his physical skill, he replied, "God blessed me with a good arm, and I'm using it."

But he admits it's much more than that.

"Once you get to this level, everyone has the physical abilities," Kimbrel said. "It's the mental that sets you apart."

Kimbrel turned for advice to closer Billy Wagner during the year, knowing that it would be Wagner's last season.

"Billy and [pitching coach] Roger

[McDowell] both have helped me with things like being faster to the plate but still staying in control," he said. "And keeping my weight on my back side for as long as I can before delivering the ball."

Soft-spoken and polite, with an accent that fades when he's away from home, Kimbrel keeps in touch with those who have helped him along the way. He exchanges voicemails with Putman, who reminds him to soak up what McDowell says, compete as he always has, and if things don't go well, "take a deep breath and go get the next guy." Putman says it's clear to him that Kimbrel now believes he belongs in the big leagues.

Weaver says he has to refrain from calling every time Kimbrel pitches, so typically he texts after games, offering encouragement. He takes pride in watching Kimbrel close.

"Craig is a competitor," he said. "He really wants the ball when the game is on the line. He loves that attention."

Kimbrel, who spent roughly two months in the majors between shuttling back and forth to Gwinnett, finished the season with four wins, one save and 40 strikeouts in just 20 2/3 innings (21 games). His ERA was 0.44, and hitters batted just .083 against him. In the post-season, he struck out seven more in 4 1/3 innings. That's 1.88 strikeouts per inning against major league hitters! In three seasons in the minors, Kimbrel struck out 242 in 151 innings, an average of 1.6 per inning. With Wagner in retirement, Kimbrel appears to be the heir apparent to close.

But to understand what's behind his eye-popping numbers, Kimbrel would turn to a red binder that he keeps in his well-organized locker. Every month he starts a new binder, where he tracks his daily workouts, the hitters he faces, the pitches he throws (type and number), and the outcome.

"I started keeping track this year," he said, sitting in the Washington clubhouse in September, the day after Cox reached his 2,500th career win.

Kimbrel updates his notes daily and keeps one card for each team, on which he lists the batters. He says eventually he may need one card per person.

"It would be nice to know all this," he said, modestly, "if I ever face the batters again."

Barring any sheetrock mishaps during the off-season, Kimbrel will need to stock up on binders. He should be seeing a lot more of those batters in 2011 and for many years to come.

I WANT TO BE READY FOR A FAST START

I ACTUALLY HAD TWO SURGERIES in one in October. Dr. (James) Andrews repaired the meniscus tear in my right knee and also something called the plica. It's a little bit of tissue that gets in the joint sometimes when you have a knee injury. It was digging into the bone and causing it to be enflamed.

When Dr. Andrews looked at my knee again right before the surgery (Oct. 19), he said he probably wouldn't have fixed it if I had been in college. He usually lets those guys go out and try to pitch through it. But since I was already in the big leagues and was having trouble with it, he went ahead and fixed it so it won't flare up next year.

So, I had two things done, but the meniscus repair didn't hurt as much as the plica. In the beginning of November, I was just really starting to get over the soreness. I was able to start running on November 20. I had to take almost a whole month off before the surgery, but I've been working out, rehabbing, since then, doing a pool workout.

I do the same workout - jumping, walking, squats - that I would do in the gym, but I do it in the water. I'm in the pool two to three hours or more. It's really tough, but it's good because there's so much resistance with the water on you. It's helped a lot, and I've lost weight, too.

I go every day to rehab with (Braves physical therapist) Lloyd Van Pamelen and then to a different place for the pool workout.

Emotionally, this was a pretty tough year because I was dealing with a lot of stuff, physical injuries and learning how to handle that kind of disappointment. I had to do a lot of growing up. I think I probably learned that I wasn't as mentally tough as I wanted to be.

> "EMOTIONALLY, THIS WAS A PRETTY TOUGH YEAR BECAUSE I WAS DEALING WITH A LOT OF STUFF..."

I'm really hard on myself, and I don't usually talk to other people about what's going on with me. I heard the negative criticism, but it's hard to have the same fire you've always had when you have things on your mind like, 'When I come down on my landing leg, am I going to hurt it more?'

It felt bad to have people thinking I was faking it, or whatever, but my goal is to come back next season and be better than this year and the year before.

I feel like I worked out too much this past off-season. I'll probably go back to working out with the trainer three days a week. I do know that the trainers actually told me that my shoulder was in the best shape they had seen it since I'd been here. Even during the season when I was pitching, I felt strong.

I'm going back to Tampa in the middle of November, and I'll stay there for a few weeks before I head back home to Curacao. I'll be on track by then to start throwing for real in January.

I want to be ready at the beginning of the season right away before the hitters are able to get their timing down. I want to get a fast break right out of the gate.

Even though I had a hard season, I still think I pitched well until my last two starts. I made 20 starts, and after I came off the disabled list, we won nine out of 11 of them.

My numbers don't really show how well I pitched, but I felt more satisfied this year than I have before. I was happy with my performance, even though it was limited at times because of injuries.

I think some people don't believe I belong up here in the majors and don't really think I'm capable. I've taken that personally and probably played with a chip on my shoulder. I want to prove that I belong here and that I can pitch at this level.

Already Deep In Pitching, The Pipeline Of Talent To Atlanta Now Is Well-Stocked With Position Players, Too

STATE OF THE FARM

BY BILL BALLEW

FARM SYSTEMS, not unlike Rome, are not built in a day. That premise could be challenged, however, based on the efforts of Tony DeMacio during his first draft as scouting director of the Atlanta Braves.

It's no secret that the player development process has been the lifeblood of the Atlanta organization since Bobby Cox and Paul Snyder, the general manager and scouting director, respectively, decided to dedicate building the Braves from within during the mid-1980s. That philosophy has remained resilient for two decades, through the front-office leadership of GMs John Schuerholz and Frank Wren.

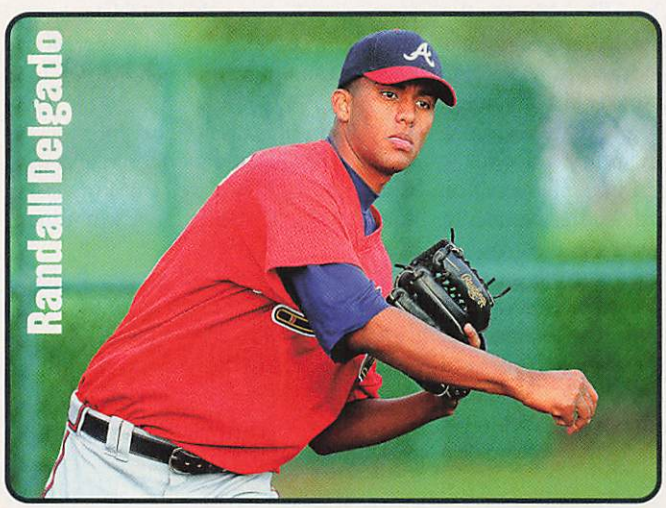
Yet prior to the 2010 season, the lack of depth among position players in the organization was evident. The farm system was full to overflowing with pitching, and there were some everyday players on the verge of contributing, most notably rookie outfielder Jason Heyward.

However, when the quality and quantity of true prospects was evaluated from top to bottom, the numbers were not as plentiful as in the recent past.

Fortunately, the situation was corrected in a big way, beginning on June 8, the first full day of the 2010 draft. DeMacio selected Matt Lipka, a shortstop from a Texas high school, with his first pick.

The veteran talent evaluator then broke with the Braves' recent trend of limiting their selection of players from four-year colleges until the latter rounds by taking outfielder Todd Cunningham (Jacksonville State) in the second round, third baseman Joe Leonard (Pitt) in the third, pitcher Dave Filak (New York/Oneonta) in the fourth, second baseman Phil Gosselin (Virginia) in the fifth, and third baseman Joe Terdoslavich (Cal State/Long Beach) in the sixth. Add shortstop Andrelton Simmons, picked out of Western Oklahoma State Junior College in the second round, and DeMacio had fortified the organization faster than anyone thought possible.

TOM PRIDDY



TOM PRIDDY

"We were able to add a few more position players to the organization and that's what we wanted to do heading into the draft," DeMacio said. "We especially wanted to build around the middle of the infield as well as the corner positions. We feel we were able to restock it a little bit, and hopefully now they will become the players we think they can be."

The task of adding depth was not left solely in the hands of DeMacio. Johnny Almaraz, Atlanta's director of international scouting, has emerged as one of the game's most gifted and innovative talent evaluators since taking over the responsibilities in 2007.

Almaraz and his scouts continued to scour Latin America and were able to obtain shortstop Edward Salcedo of the Dominican Republic for a signing bonus of $1.6 million, the highest ever given by the Braves to a foreign-born player. Other acquisitions included

pitcher Mauricio Cabrera from the Dominican Republic and pitcher Oriel Caicedo and catcher Carlos Sanchez, both from Panama.

Add those acquisitions to the rapid development shown by middle infielder Elmer Reyes and pitcher Carlos Perez, both of whom made their professional debuts in 2009, and the Braves accrued more talent than most observers thought possible in such a short period.

"We are an organization that focuses on signing and developing our own prospects," Wren said. "Johnny Almaraz and Tony DeMacio have put us in a great position with the additions of this past year. We have one of the strongest systems in all of baseball because of their efforts."

As productive as Almaraz and DeMacio have been, the Braves' professional scouts also deserve credit for the added depth. One of the reasons Atlanta was low on position players stemmed from the fact that trades made to strengthen the major league club, including the acquisition of Mark Teixeira (July 2007 from Texas for five prospects, two of which - shortstop Elvis Andrus and closer Neftali Feliz - were key members of this year's AL champ Rangers) and Javier Vazquez (from the White Sox for four prospects prior to 2009), came at the expense of the farm system.

That scenario has been reversed in recent deals. For example, pitchers Arodys Vizcaino and Michael Dunn were significant acquisitions in last winter's deal that shipped Vazquez to the New York Yankees. The Braves also obtained shortstop Tyler Pastornicky from Toronto last summer as part of the major league trade involving Alex Gonzalez and Yunel Escobar.

"The acquisition of talent can come from a variety of sources, and our professional scouts have done an outstanding job of evaluating players on other teams so that when Frank goes to make a trade, we're getting significant talent in return," said Kurt Kemp, the Braves' director of player development.

"We've also done a great job of signing non-drafted guys, like pitchers Brandon Beachy and Scott Diamond, and a few players off independent league clubs. Our entire baseball operations staff uses every avenue in searching for and signing talent, which is why we are dealing now from a position of strength in terms of our depth."

While other organizations have employed older rosters in the minors and won championships at various levels, the Braves continue to focus more on developing players who can win in the major leagues. That, too, was achieved in 2010 when Heyward, infielder Brooks Conrad and pitchers Jonny Venters, Craig Kimbrel and Mike Minor were among the rookies who contributed to Atlanta's wild-card berth in the National League playoffs.

Youth is expected to be served yet again in 2011, headed by first baseman Freddie Freeman and a handful of young arms ready to contribute at the end of the rotation or in the bullpen, including Beachy, Kimbrel, Erik Cordier, Lee Hyde, Michael Broadway and Stephen Marek, just to name a few.

"We have a strong group of players in our minor league system with a good distribution of pitching talent throughout the organization," Kemp said. "Our depth among the position guys is as good as it's been in the past few years, and with continued improvement, many of them will have a chance to contribute to our major league club at some point in the near future.

"We've been very focused on adding talent, and our coaching staffs and instructors continue to do an outstanding job of molding and developing the players. A lot of the things we're able to achieve are by design, and I expect us to continue doing that for a long time to come."

ChopTalk's Top 10 Prospects

(Age as of Opening Day 2011)
2010 Club(s) and composite stats - BA-HR-RBI for hitters; W-L, ERA for pitchers

1. **Craig Kimbrel**, 22, RHP, Gwinnett, 3-2, 1.62
2. **Freddie Freeman**, 21, 1B, Gwinnett .319-18-87
3. **Mike Minor**, 23, LHP, Mississippi/Gwinnett, 6-7, 3.44
4. **Julio Teheran**, 20, RHP, Rome/Myrtle Beach/Mississippi, 9-8, 2.59
5. **Randall Delgado**, 21, RHP, Myrtle Beach/Mississippi, 7-12, 3.30
6. **Matt Lipka**, 18, SS, Gulf Coast/Danville, .288-1-25
7. **Arodys Vizcaino**, 20, RHP, Rome/Myrtle Beach, 9-4, 2.74
8. **Brandon Beachy**, 24, RHP, Mississippi/Gwinnett, 5-1, 1.73
9. **J.J. Hoover**, 23, RHP, Myrtle Beach/Mississippi, 14-7, 3.29
10. **Brett Oberholtzer**, 21, LHP, Rome/Myrtle Beach, 6-8, 3.78

The Next 20

11. **Mycal Jones**, 23, 2B, Rome/Myrtle Beach/Mississippi, .262-15-61
12. **Christian Bethancourt**, 19, C, Rome, .251-3-34
13. **Andrelton Simmons**, 21, SS, Danville, .276-2-26
14. **Phil Gosselin**, 22, 2B, Rome/Myrtle Beach, .279-2-24
15. **Michael Dunn**, 25, LHP, Gwinnett, 2-0, 1.52
16. **Edward Salcedo**, 19, SS, Dominican/Rome, .225-3-27
17. **Carlos Perez**, 19, LHP, Danville/Rome, 2-1, 1.62
18. **David Hale**, 23, RHP, Rome, 5-8, 4.13
19. **Tyler Pastornicky**, 21, SS, Dunedin/Mississippi, .257-8-50
20. **Todd Cunningham**, 22, OF, Rome, .260-1-20
21. **Erik Cordier**, 25, RHP, Mississippi/Gwinnett, 12-8, 3.82
22. **Scott Diamond**, 24, LHP, Mississippi/Gwinnett, 8-7, 3.46
23. **Dave Filak**, 21, RHP, Danville, 0-2, 2.42
24. **Joe Leonard**, 22, 3B, Danville/Rome, .270-4-24
25. **Elmer Reyes**, 20, 2B, GCL/Danville, .301-6-29
26. **Dimasther Delgado**, 22, LHP, did not pitch/injured
27. **Robert Hefflinger**, 21, OF, Rome, .245-6-53
28. **Cory Harrilchak**, 23, OF, Rome/Myrtle Beach, .287-3-47
29. **Joe Terdoslavich**, 22, 3B, Danville/Rome, .302-2-34
30. **Cory Rasmus**, 23, RHP, Rome/Myrtle Beach, 6-9, 3.18

Top Prospects By Position

(Team = Projected Placement To Start 2011)

C	**Christian Bethancourt**, Age 19, Lynchburg
1B	**Freddie Freeman**, 21, Atlanta
2B	**Mycal Jones**, 23, Mississippi
3B	**Joe Leonard**, 22, Lynchburg
SS	**Matt Lipka**, 18, Rome
LF	**Todd Cunningham**, 22, Lynchburg
CF	**Cory Harrilchak**, 23, Lynchburg
RF	**Robert Hefflinger**, 21, Lynchburg
RHP	**Julio Teheran**, 20, Mississippi
LHP	**Mike Minor**, 23, Atlanta
CL	**Craig Kimbrel**, 22, Atlanta

TOP POSITION PLAYERS

1 FREDDIE FREEMAN, 1B

The International League's 2010 Rookie of the Year also was named the league's best fielding first baseman and led the organization with 87 RBIs. He is expected to be Atlanta's starter at first in 2011.

2 MATT LIPKA, SS

The Braves' first draft pick in 2010 earned all-star honors in the Gulf Coast League in his pro debut while displaying outstanding speed and a line-drive stroke that should create havoc at higher levels.

3 MYCAL JONES, 2B

A consistent shortstop during his first two pro seasons, Jones moved to second base during Instructional League and looked like a natural from the start. His ability to drive the ball makes him a potent-hitting middle infielder.

4 CHRISTIAN BETHANCOURT, C

The Panamanian receiver turned around a mediocre showing at Rome during the final month of the season. His arm strength is impressive, and his catching skills could make him special once his bat becomes more consistent.

5 ANDRELTON SIMMONS, SS

An unknown prior to the 2010 draft, the Curacao native joined the Braves via Western Oklahoma State Junior College. He's an outstanding fielder with a cannon for an arm but needs to make more contact at the plate.

6 PHIL GOSSELIN, 2B

Primarily an outfielder at the University of Virginia, the gritty Gosselin made a seamless transition to second base while showing the ability to hit for average and some power at a variety of slots in the batting order.

7 EDWARD SALCEDO, SS

The Dominican signed for a Braves' international record of $1.6 million last spring. He has all the tools to excel and the ability to post some impressive offensive numbers but needs significant game experience.

8 TYLER PASTORNICKY, SS

Acquired from Toronto last season in the deal that also brought Alex Gonzalez to Atlanta, Pastornicky drives the ball well at the plate and shows excellent athleticism in the field with consistent hands and quick feet.

9 TODD CUNNINGHAM, OF

The product of Jacksonville State led the Cape Cod League in hitting in 2009 prior to being Atlanta's second pick in the 2010 draft. He showed at Rome the ability to play all three outfield positions while hitting for average.

10 JOE LEONARD, 3B

Drafted in the third round out of the University of Pittsburgh in June, Leonard was slowed by a sore arm over the summer and during Instructional League but has great size (6-5, 220) and athleticism to be a classic hard-hitting third baseman.

11 ELMER REYES, 2B

Capable of playing either position in the middle infield, Reyes is a plus-rated fielder with great baseball instincts who puts the bat on the ball with consistency and shows surprising power for his size.

12 ROBBY HEFFLINGER, OF

The outfielder joined Rome in late April out of extended spring training and missed six weeks after suffering a hairline fracture in his thumb on July 4, yet still led the R-Braves with 53 RBIs by spraying line drives to all fields.

13 CORY HARRILCHAK, OF

Harrilchak made the jump from the South Atlantic to the Carolina League during the season and still managed to rank among the top 10 hitters in the organization. His play in center field is also a plus.

14 JOE TERDOSLAVICH, 3B

Drafted out of Long Beach State, Terdoslavich has a big body for third base that might lead to moving across the diamond to first. He possesses power from both sides of the plate with a good knowledge of the strike zone.

15 ADAM MILLIGAN, OF

After putting together one of the best individual seasons in the organization in 2009, Milligan struggled for a month at Myrtle Beach and underwent rotator cuff surgery in late June. His power/average combination remains intriguing.

16 BRANDON HICKS, SS

The Texas A&M product bounced between Atlanta and Gwinnett in 2010 due to injuries at the major league level. His fielding continues to shine, but he needs to hit for a consistently higher average.

17 JESUS SUCRE, C

After a breakthrough season in 2009, Sucre struggled at the plate in the Carolina League but hit well in 38 games at Mississippi. His catching skills continue to improve, and his arm strength is among the best in the organization.

18 KURT FLEMING, OF

The son of Braves' East Coast crosschecker Steven Fleming, Kurt turned down the opportunity to play football at Army to sign with Atlanta as an eighth-round pick in June. He has excellent athleticism along with the ability to put the ball in play.

19 CODY JOHNSON, OF

A hamstring injury, power outage and high strikeout totals led to a demotion from the Southern to the Carolina League midway through last season. The 2006 first-round pick can hit the ball a long way but must do so more consistently.

20 BRAEDEN SCHLEHUBER, C

Not unlike Brandon Hicks, the Southern Nevada product is an excellent fielder who calls a good game and possesses a strong arm. His hitting, however, needs improvement.

TOP PITCHERS

1 CRAIG KIMBREL, RH

The reliever's development has been smooth and fast, culminating with an impressive run during the pennant race with Atlanta. With the retirement of Billy Wagner, Kimbrel's development could not have been timed any better.

2 MIKE MINOR, LH

The Vanderbilt product showed why he was the seventh overall pick in 2009 by dominating in the minors before winning three games late in the season with Atlanta. With his deep repertoire, Minor should become a fixture in the Atlanta rotation.

3 JULIO TEHERAN, RH

Considered to be the top prospect in both the South Atlantic and Carolina leagues last year, Teheran dominated at three levels while ranking second in the organization with 159 strikeouts and a 2.59 ERA.

4 RANDALL DELGADO, RH

The righthander from Panama has electric stuff and throws three pitches for strikes. Those strengths enabled him to lead the organization with 162 strikeouts and rank fifth with a 3.30 ERA in 2010.

5 ARODYS VIZCAINO, RH

Acquired from the Yankees last winter, the Dominican righthander refined his feel for pitching and work habits during the first half at Rome before a strained elbow ligament sidelined him for two months following a promotion to Myrtle Beach.

6 BRANDON BEACHY, RH

Signed by the Braves in 2008 as a non-drafted free agent, Beachy led the minors with a 1.73 ERA in 2010 while moving from the bullpen to the rotation at Mississippi. He reached Atlanta in September (three starts) and could stay there in 2011.

7 J.J. HOOVER, RH

A classic power pitcher with a thick lower body and the ability to eat innings, Hoover paced the organization with 14 wins and ranked third with 152 strikeouts and fourth with a 3.29 ERA.

8 BRETT OBERHOLTZER, LH

An aggressive lefty who blew through Rome in a month before hitting the Carolina League in May, Oberholtzer has outstanding command and works both sides of the plate with his above-average changeup and curveball.

9 MICHAEL DUNN, LH

Another former Yankee, Dunn was a two-way player in college and during his first two professional seasons before focusing on pitching in 2007. His fastball touches 98 mph, which should land him back in the Atlanta bullpen after ending the 2010 season there.

10 CARLOS PEREZ, LH

Deemed the top prospect in the Appalachian League last year by at least one publication, the Dominican lefty has a lean frame and a low-90s fastball that project to bigger things in the future. A rib fracture ended his 2010 season after two starts at Rome.

11 DAVID HALE, RH

A two-way player at Princeton, Hale made the move from a starter to a reliever during the first half of the 2010 season at Rome. His lightning-fast arm generates a lethal combination of a low 90s fastball and a sharp curveball.

12 ERIK CORDIER, RH

Slowed by injuries since arriving from the Royals in 2007, Cordier blossomed at Mississippi in 2010 and moved up late to Gwinnett while ranking second in the organization with 12 wins. He could battle for a bullpen job in Atlanta in 2011.

13 SCOTT DIAMOND, LH

After clearing some hurdles at Mississippi, the former non-drafted Canadian lefthander became Gwinnett's most consistent starter during the last two months of the season by keeping all of his pitches in the lower third of the strike zone.

14 DAVE FILAK, RH

A former walk-on catcher at Oneonta State, Filak was Atlanta's fourth-round draft pick in June after showing a fastball that touches 95 mph and a hard overhand curveball that is clocked consistently in the low 80s.

15 DIMASTHER DELGADO, LH

Injuries suffered in a pre-season car accident sidelined Delgado for all of the 2010 season. He impressed in 2009 with his outstanding changeup that he mixes with a low-90s fastball and the ability to pitch inside consistently.

16 CORY RASMUS, RH

The brother of major league outfielder Colby Rasmus pitched more in 2010 than he had in his first four pro seasons combined. With his shoulder problems behind him, he ranked third in the organization with a 3.18 ERA.

17 PAUL CLEMENS, RH

Dominant at Rome early in the season, Clemens showed some inconsistency while moving between the rotation and bullpen after a promotion to Myrtle Beach. He can touch 97 mph with his fastball and has an above-average curveball when he's in synch.

18 CALEB BREWER, RH

After striking out 65 batters in 44 2/3 innings in the GCL in 2009, Brewer was placed on the disabled list in late July 2010 with a right lower leg stress fracture. He also missed all of 2008 with a hip injury. When healthy, he has an electric arm.

19 ZEKE SPRUILL, RH

For the second straight year, the second-round pick in 2008 missed extended activity, this time a three-month stint with a broken hand he suffered in April. He showed outstanding command of his sinker in August.

20 BRETT DEVALL, LH

Forearm and elbow discomfort limited DeVall during his first two pro seasons. Last year at Rome, the Braves' first pick in the 2008 draft split his first 14 decisions before he was sidelined with inflammation in his pitching elbow.

ChopTalk
IS GOING
DIGITAL
BRAVES.COM/CHOPTALK

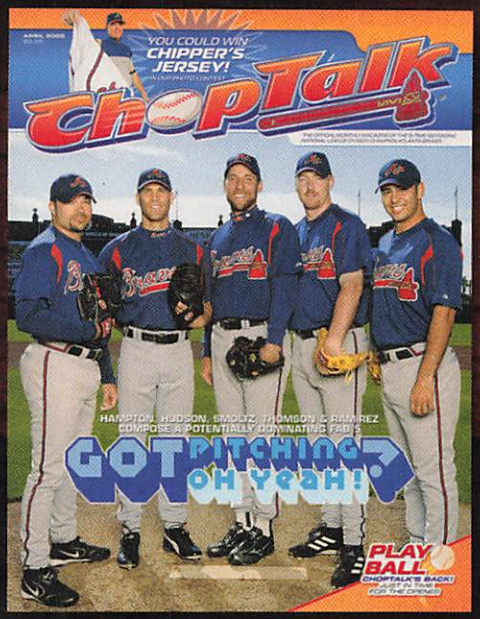
Dear *ChopTalk* Subscribers:
Change is coming!

In the next several months, *ChopTalk* as you've known it will change, and we think change is good! *ChopTalk* will become a digital magazine that will update regularly, include video enhancements to our stories and much more. And it will be available only on braves.com.

More details will be coming soon, but you can visit braves.com/choptalk to make sure we have your e-mail address. Once there, you can also provide feedback on your subscription to ensure that Braves fans get the most out of *ChopTalk*.

If you don't have an e-mail address, you can call 404-614-1573.

braves.com™

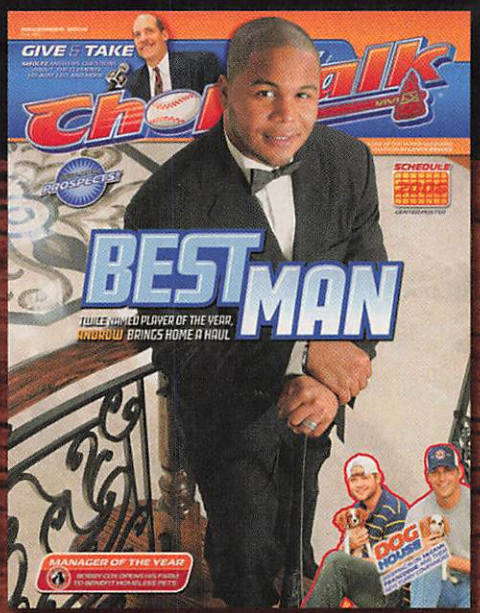


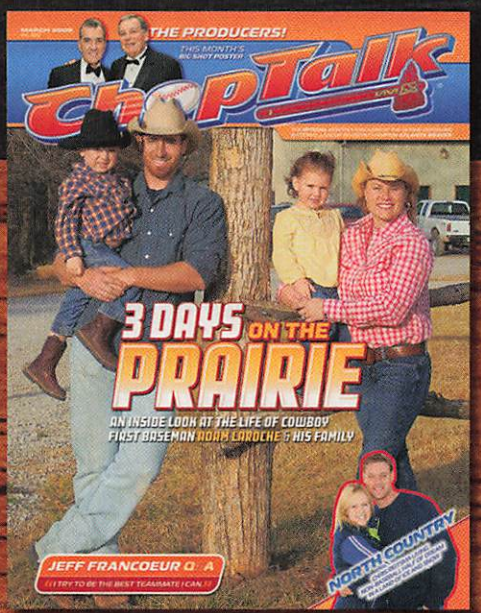
2005-2010 ChopTalk

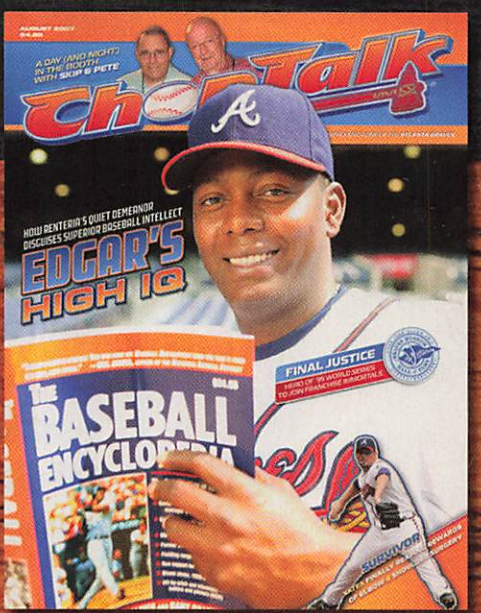
THE OFFICIAL MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF

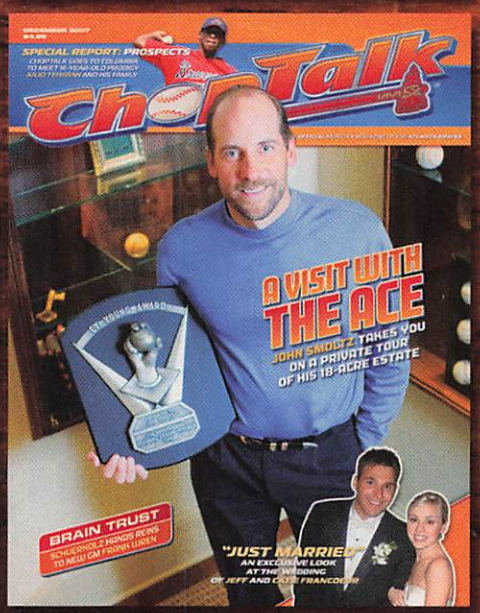
This is the last printed issue of ChopTalk. It will continue as a digital magazine only, under the direction of Major League Baseball Advanced Media.

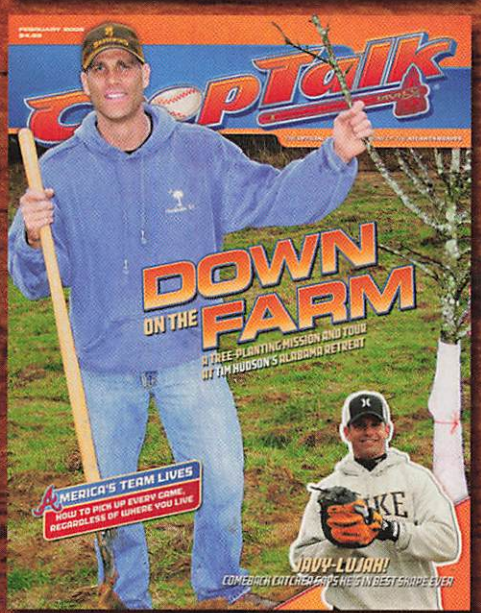
This version of ChopTalk was launched in April 2005 After a three-month interruption caused by the original publisher dropping it following 132 issues published from

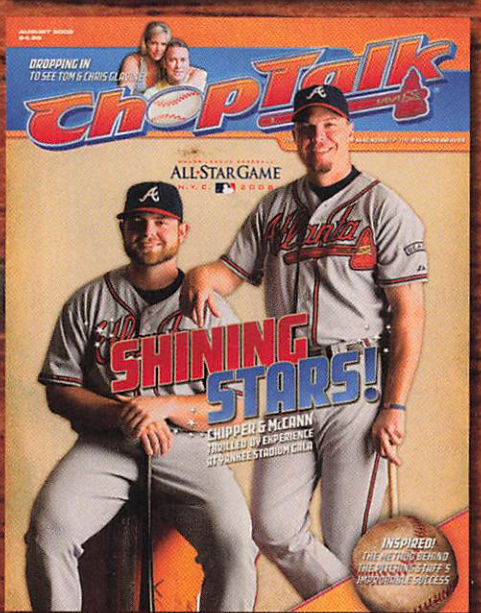












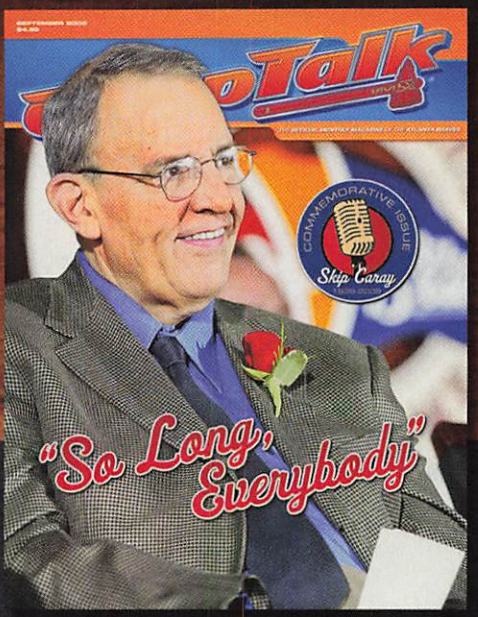
ChopTalk

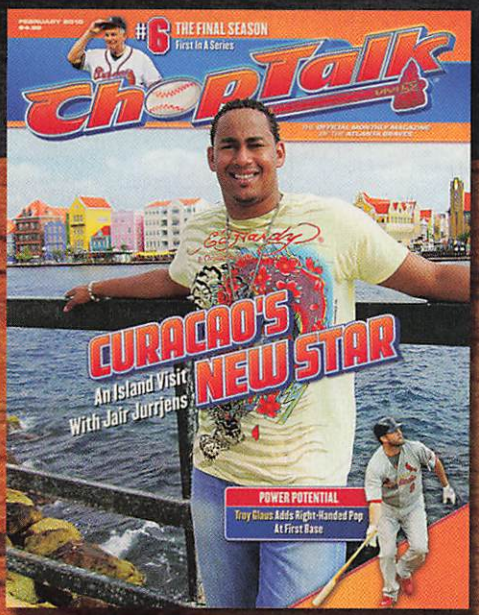
THE ATLANTA BRAVES

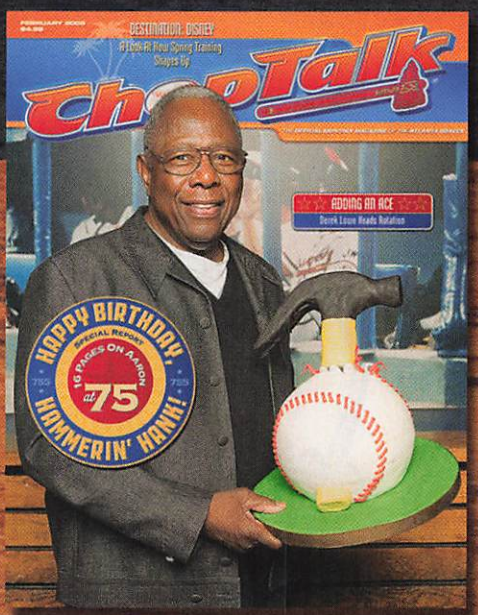
JANUARY 1994 TO DECEMBER 2004.

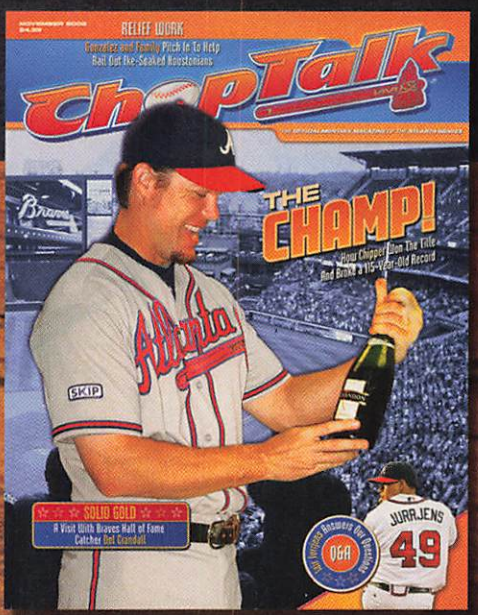
GARY CARUSO, PREVIOUSLY THE MAGAZINE'S EDITOR, RE-LAUNCHED CHOPTALK AND PUBLISHED IT FOR 69 MONTHS, MAKING A TOTAL OF 201 ISSUES. ALL 201 COVERS CAN BE VIEWED ON CARUSO'S FACEBOOK PAGE.

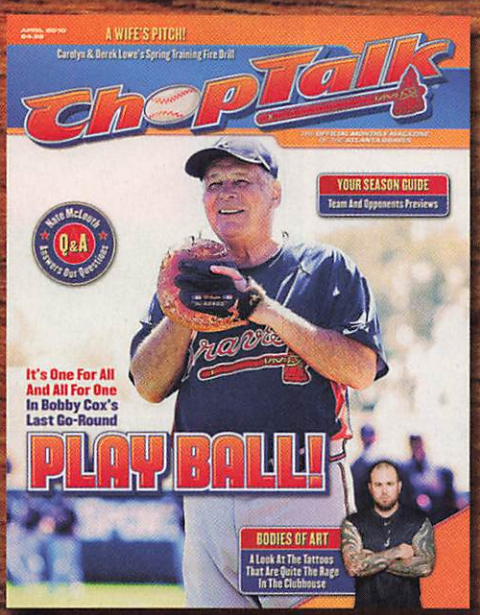
WE LEAVE YOU WITH THESE TWO PAGES OF EXAMPLES OF CHOPTALK COVERS OVER THE LAST SIX YEARS.

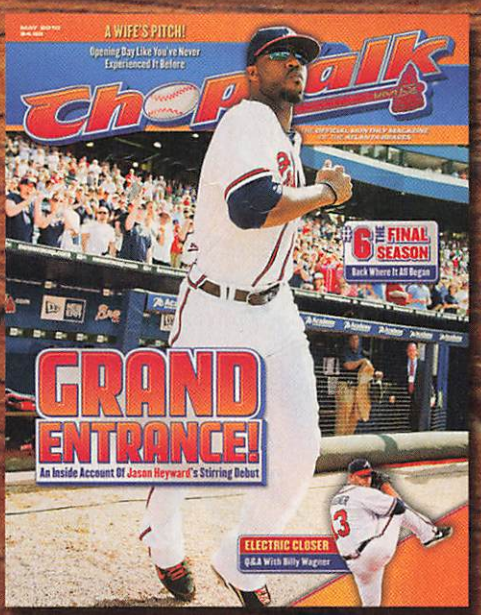


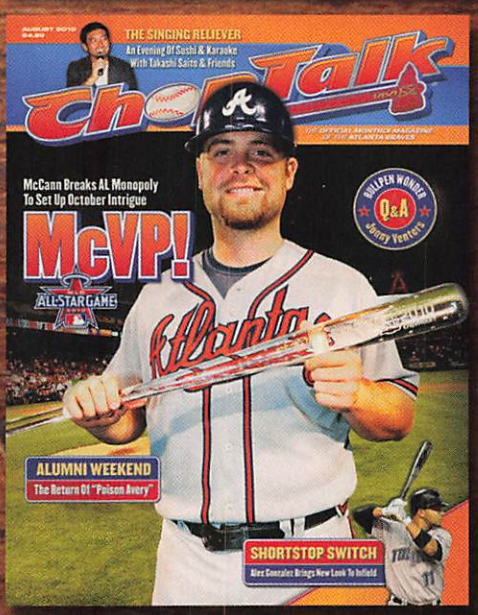












Only 21 Years Old, Rookie Freddie Freeman Is Primed For A Starting Role

HE'S ON FIRST

BY JON COOPER

The Braves haven't had the same starting first baseman for two consecutive seasons since Adam LaRoche (2004-06), but Freeman has the potential to stop that revolving door for quite a while.

PHOTO: ALLISON SHIRREFFS

Freddie Freeman has always been close to the big leagues.

Growing up in Fountain Valley, Calif., he was less than 20 minutes away from Angels Stadium, home of the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim. If all goes according to plan, he'll soon be making a similar drive every day to Turner Field.

Freeman already knows the way. He played the final two exhibition games of 2010 spring training at Turner Field, then was called up from Triple-A Gwinnett on Sept. 1 and played in 20 games down the stretch of the regular season. It was a month to remember, as he celebrated his 21st birthday in the major leagues on Sept. 12 while participating in Atlanta's pursuit of its first playoff berth in five years.

"People always say, 'What a great year you had,'" he said. "I've never really had words for it. It was very humbling, and I was very blessed to have a season like that. To get an opportunity to get called up like I did was a dream come true."

But the dream isn't over. It's barely begun, and Freeman knows that continuing the dream requires work, and a lot of it. Putting in that work became a bit more difficult after he injured his left thumb on a slide five games into the Arizona Fall League schedule. The Braves responded by pulling Freeman off the roster for precautionary reasons — much like they did with last year's phenom-in-waiting, Jason Heyward, who suffered a leg injury early in the AFL — and instructed him not to touch a bat for six weeks. He found other ways to avoid the "off" in "off-season."

"I'm running a couple of miles a day," he said. "I can still go to the gym and do some leg work, where I don't have to pull any weights. I'm making do with what I've got right now."

The Braves are eager to see what Freeman can do at full strength on a regular basis.

"The organization raved about him, and I got to take a couple of sneak peeks at him," said new Braves manager Fredi Gonzalez. "I love his stroke. He's got some power there. His defense is pretty good, too. I think he's ready to play in the big leagues, so we're going to give him that opportunity."

POUYA DIANAT/ATLANTA BRAVES

An opportunity is all Freeman has ever needed to prove himself. A second-round pick in the 2007 June draft (78th overall) — a draft that also netted Heyward in the first round at No. 14 overall and reliever Craig Kimbrel in the 33rd — Freeman has fast-tracked it through the minor leagues, jumping two levels in each of the past two seasons (Advanced-A and Double-A in '09, Triple-A to the majors last season).

Paving the way has been the 6-5, 225-pounder's smoking left-handed bat (he throws right), with which he's hit .301 through the minors with a .835 OPS (on-base percentage plus slugging), and a pair of soft hands. He's a career .991 fielder and was errorless in 12 games in Atlanta. He was named Best Defensive First Baseman in Double A and Class A by Baseball America and the Carolina and Southern League managers.

Freeman cleared the final hurdle to the majors last season, working through a tough start at Gwinnett that saw him hit .176 (9-for-51) through 13 games, with no homers, two RBIs and 12 strikeouts. He was only hitting .259 through two months, with five homers, 24 RBIs.

"I started off a little slow, but I didn't get down," he said. "I just stuck to what I've always done, then things started to click and I started hitting."

The biggest change came when Freeman made a couple of slight adjustments, namely opening up his stance.

"He's just a tremendous young talent with a nice, simple approach," said Gwinnett hitting coach Jamie Dismuke. "He matured in one season at the Triple-A level very quickly. He catches on fast. He's able to make adjustments fast. He gets good pitches to hit, and he's going to be a tremendous talent at the next level.

"Freddie doesn't think anybody should be able to get him out," he added. "That's a great asset."

Not many pitchers were able to get him out in the second half of the season. Freeman hit .375 after the All-Star break, with a .432 on-base percentage (up 85 points from the first half), including .394 in August, with 11 doubles, four homers and 24 RBIs. When he got the call to Atlanta, he was batting .319, with 35 doubles, 18 homers and 87 RBIs. He led the International League in hits (147) and total

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

BREWERS SET TO DEAL BATS TO OBTAIN ARMS

THE BREWERS are open to trading any hitter except leftfielder **Ryan Braun** as they try to upgrade their rotation. Both second baseman **Rickie Weeks** and first baseman **Prince Fielder** are free agents after next season, and Weeks, represented by **Greg Genske**, might not be any more willing to entertain an extension than Fielder, who is represented by **Scott Boras**. At the very least, Weeks might want to wait a while to see if the Braves negotiate a long-term deal with **Dan Uggla**, who also will be eligible for free agency if he doesn't sign.

AB

The Padres continue to receive inquiries about the availability of first baseman **Adrian Gonzalez**, even after Gonzalez said that he would be unable to swing a bat for four to five months after undergoing right shoulder surgery. One reason teams might not have been discouraged by the uncertainty: Gonzalez underwent surgery with the idea of putting up monster numbers next season before he hits free agency. Gonzalez, forced by his injury to use a lighter bat in the second half of last season, was disappointed by his diminished power - he hit only 10 of his 31 homers after Aug. 1.

AB

The Cubs, accustomed to strong first-base defense in the past from **Derrek Lee**, might prefer a stronger fielder than free agent **Adam Dunn** – particularly given the makeup of the rest of their infield. Advance metrics portray second baseman **Blake DeWitt** and third baseman **Aramis Ramirez** as below-average defenders, while shortstop **Starlin Castro** will be only 21 next season and still prone to mistakes.

AB

The Padres assumed the greater risk in obtaining centerfielder **Cameron Maybin** from the Marlins for relievers **Ryan Webb** and **Edwin Mujica**. Maybin, 23, could benefit from a change of scenery and lower expectations, but questions persist about his concentration, instincts and ability to hit breaking balls. The Padres, whose centerfielders batted only a combined .234 last season, figure that Maybin, even with only marginal improvement, will be better than what they had.

AB

Add the Mets' **Carlos Beltran** to the list of potential outfield/DH solutions for AL clubs such as the White Sox and Rangers. To trade Beltran, the Mets would need to assume a significant portion of his $18.5 million salary for 2011. Beltran, 33, has a full no-trade clause, but probably would jump to play in a hitter-friendly park in his walk year.

AB

The Marlins were considering a reunion with free-agent righthander **Carl Pavano** after trading **Dan Uggla**. The Marlins used some of the savings from the Uggla deal to sign catcher **John Buck** from Toronto. Pavano, who pitched in Florida from 2002 to '04, continues to enjoy a close relationship with Marlins owner **Jeffrey Loria**.

AB

The Rockies again drew heavy trade interest in infielder **Clint Barmes**, but only figure to move him or non-tender him if they were unable to sign him to a multi-year deal. Barmes, entering his final year of arbitration, could make sense for teams looking for help at second base or shortstop.

- KEN ROSENTHAL IS A SENIOR WRITER FOR FOXSPORTS.COM

bases (240) and was second in batting average, RBIs, doubles and extra-base hits (55). Through it all, his fielding never wavered. He led all first basemen with a .994 percentage. It added up to his being named International League Rookie of the Year.

In his short time in Atlanta, Freeman hit only .163, mostly in a pinch-hitting role, but showed he's capable of taking any pitcher deep. On Sept. 21, he came off the bench and blasted the first pitch he saw from Philadelphia ace Roy Halladay into the bullpen in deep right field of Citizens Bank Park.

"I have watched it a couple of times," he said with a laugh. "The part I watch is hitting the home run and afterward, what my teammates were doing. I don't even remember because I just blacked out. I was so excited. It was pretty cool. It's something I'll be able to tell my kids and grandkids."

He's hoping to have more to tell future generations, starting in spring training. His increased role has started to come into view for him because of the apparent departure of both of Atlanta's 2010 first basemen — free agents Troy Glaus and Derrek Lee.

"My mind-set going into the spring is, I have a job to win," he said. "I know I have a chance this year. I'm going to go in and do what I've done my whole life — get my work in, keep playing — and whatever happens, happens. I'm just going to work hard, keep my mind-set on baseball."

If that approach sounds familiar, it should. It's the same one taken last year by Heyward, Freeman's best friend and roommate. The two are cut from the same cloth.

"When we're not playing baseball, we don't like to talk about it," he said. "We just like to be kids. We just like to have fun, watch movies, hang out with friends, go eat. We can talk about anything personal, anything family. It's nice having someone like that."

It's also nice that Freeman lived with Heyward as he went through 2010.

"I've seen what he's had to go through and what he's done," said Freeman. "He definitely has helped me. Having him around will definitely help out if my first big league season happens. He's definitely a guy I'm going to lean on a little bit. It's great to have him around."

"If" remains the key word with Freeman, though he has allowed himself at least one step into "what if" territory regarding 2011.

"We play the Angels next year [May 20-22 in Anaheim]," he said. "I live 10 minutes from Angels Stadium. So, that's when it will hit me if I am here."

INSIDE FREDI'S MANAGERIAL RECORD

POLIYA DAMIAT/ATLANTA BRAVES

Fredi Gonzalez, being introduced by Frank Wren, uses sacrifice bunts less frequently than Bobby Cox but favors intentional walks like his predecessor did.

BY STEVE FALL

OVER 20 YEARS HAS PASSED since somebody besides Bobby Cox managed the Braves. So the spotlight will be on new manager Fredi Gonzalez next spring. What can fans expect from him?

Evaluating managers with statistics isn't easy, especially since much of their success depends on their players. But a couple of different methods provide insight.

One approach involves comparing team performance before, during and after their tenure. Gonzalez took over the Marlins to open the 2007 season and posted a 276-279 record until he was fired last June. That gave him a .497 winning percentage. The previous Florida manager, Joe Girardi, went 78-84 in his only season there (2006), for a .481 winning percentage. Edwin Rodriguez succeeded Gonzalez this year, and posted a .500 mark (46-46).

Girardi and Rodriquez combined for a 124-130 record. Gonzalez's .497 winning percentage narrowly topped those two managers (.488). The difference isn't much, but it comes out in Gonzalez's favor.

Success in one-run games is another way to evaluate managers. It certainly gets impacted by luck and personnel. For example, teams with great closers often play well in one-run games. Over a large enough numbers of games – such as the three and a half seasons Gonzalez spent with Florida – managerial strategy should play a role in one-run game performance.

Given that the Marlins had close to a .500 record during Gonzalez's tenure with Florida, his teams should have played near that level in one-run games. They went 83-76, surpassing the .500 mark by seven games. So, this looks like a positive sign for Gonzalez as an in-game strategist, especially since he didn't have an elite closer at any time.

For insight into tactics and strategy by major league managers, the Bill James Handbook has some interesting statistics. According to the numbers, it appears that Gonzalez favors a set lineup more than most managers.

In 2009, his last full season with the Marlins, he used the second-fewest different lineups (97) among National League managers. Cox used 112 different lineups that year. Both fell below the league average of 122. Gonzalez finished below the average in his other two full seasons, as well.

Gonzalez used the sacrifice bunt less frequently than most managers. The Marlins attempted 86 in 2009, six below the NL average. Cox led the league with 125. Gonzalez also tied for the fewest sacrifice attempts (61) in 2008.

The biggest similarity between Gonzalez and Cox – among these statistics – is the number of intentional walks they issue. Both finished well above the league average of 49 each year from 2007 through 2009. Gonzalez averaged 62 per season versus 76 for Cox.

The Braves led the NL in walks this past season with 634, leading the second-ranked Diamondbacks (589) by a wide margin. This marked the fourth-highest total in franchise history. Only the Boston Braves of 1949 (684) and the 1948 pennant-winning team (667), and the 1987 Atlanta club (641) drew more walks.

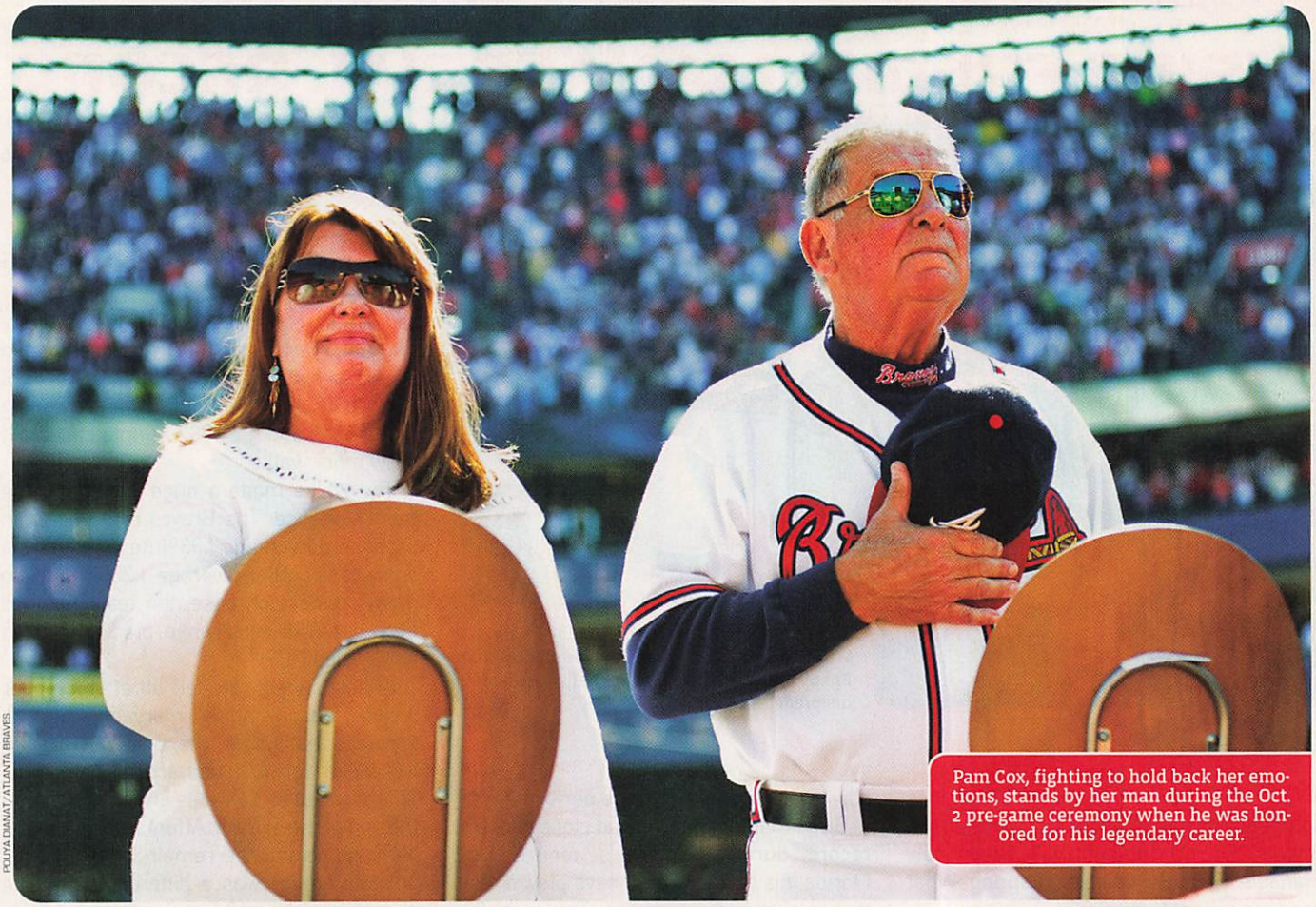
The walks made a huge impact on the team's offense. The Braves ranked first in on-base percentage (.339) despite just the sixth-best batting average (.258). With so many runners on base, the team finished fifth with 738 runs while placing 11th in home runs (139).

Atlanta's walk rate fell off after Chipper Jones' season-ending injury on Aug. 10. Through that game, the Braves averaged 4.0 walks and 4.5 runs scored per game. This dropped to 3.6 walks after Aug. 10 until the end of the season. Atlanta still averaged 6.4 runs during the remainder of August, but September was a different story. The club managed just 3.5 runs per game. Then in the four-game Division Series loss to the Giants, the Braves drew only seven walks and scored just nine runs.

One strikeout per inning makes a good benchmark for identifying strikeout pitchers. Anybody who exceeds that figure is missing bats at an impressive rate. Craig Kimbrel came close to striking out two batters per inning in 2010. He also had a 0.44 ERA.

Kimbrel pitched very little in the majors, working just 20 2/3 innings out of the Atlanta bullpen. So these statistics should not get taken too seriously until he sustains his dominance over at least 50 innings. Nonetheless, the young righthander's rate of strikeouts is amazing.

Among pitchers with at least 20 innings in a season, Kimbrel's 17.4 strikeouts per nine innings rank first in major league history. Cubs closer Carlos Marmol posted the next highest rate (16.0) in 2010, as well. Prior to this past season, Eric Gagne (15.0 in 2003) had the best figure. The player who Kimbrel could replace as Braves closer, Billy Wagner, placed fourth with 14.9 strikeouts per nine innings in 1999.



POLLYA DIANAT/ATLANTA BRAVES

Pam Cox, fighting to hold back her emotions, stands by her man during the Oct. 2 pre-game ceremony when he was honored for his legendary career.

THE NEXT CHAPTER

Bobby Cox Isn't Exactly Riding Off Into the Sunset, But His Plans Include Much More Than Baseball

BY PATTY RASMUSSEN

WITHIN 36 HOURS of the final out of the Braves' Division Series loss to San Francisco, two requests for appearances by then former manager Bobby Cox landed in the e-mail inbox of Brad Hainje, the team's director of media relations.

One request came from a group in Nashville, and the other came from an organization in southwest Florida. Both were interested in hosting Cox, knowing the enormous following he has among baseball fans of every stripe, and that his presence would lend instant credibility and interest in their cause.

LAST IN A SERIES
#6 THE FINAL SEASON

That such invitations came in so soon after his retirement is a surprise to no one but the man himself.

At his final press conference two days after the last game, Cox was asked whether he might join a speaker's bureau and get on the motivational speaking tour. He looked embarrassed, chuckled and deftly side-stepped answering the question.

"I don't know," he said. "I do want to play more golf. I'd like to hit in the high 70s, low 80s. I don't know if I can do that at my age (69), but that's my ambition right now."

Golf, travel, spending time with his family... those are a few of the items on Cox's to-do list. His wife, Pam, added a few more.

"He'll need to learn how to set the house alarm and learn where to find things in the house," she said with a laugh.

A month after all the public recognition and accolades quieted down, Pam hosted a private retirement party Nov. 7 at Brookfield Country Club in the Atlanta suburb of Roswell. The guest list included family, close friends and Braves staff - from long-time clubhouse attendants to front office staff and coaches.

"There were no current players," said Ronnie Snitker, wife of third base coach Brian Snitker. "It was just a fun party - cocktails, dinner

and dancing."

As guests arrived, they signed a life-sized photo of Cox walking up the Turner Field tunnel. Pam set up a photo station, complete with Braves gear and a Polaroid camera, so that guests could dress up, then have their picture taken and put it in a memory book, along with a personal message.

The evening began with delivery of a singing telegram to Cox from Pam. A Braves cap had been modified to read "PAM," the "P" and "M" stitched in pink on either side of the Braves "A." The words to "Great Balls of Fire" by Jerry Lee Lewis were re-written with clever lyrics including this chorus, "Goodness gracious, Bobby's retired!"

Pam's response to her husband's decision to retire from managing that he announced late last year was similar to that of most fans.

"When he told me he did it - decided to retire - and told the Braves, I didn't believe it," she said. "Early in this season, I still didn't believe it. That's how much I know he loved the game. This is his life. This is all he's done."

Despite having acted as a "single mom" to their daughter, Skyla, for much of the time - literally for decades - Pam said occasional difficulties were outweighed by the joy she had watching Cox live his dream.

"What a blessing to see him go to work and be so happy," she said. "He was as excited this past season as he was 32 years ago."

SPECIAL

Wearing his specially modified Braves cap to honor his wife, Cox dances with Pam at the private retirement party she hosted Nov. 7 at Brookfield Country Club that was attended by family, friends and Braves employees.

But Pam also saw chinks in the baseball armor.

"I think he's mellowed out a lot," she said. "He was more sentimental than I'd seen him. When we celebrated Skyla's birthday at spring training, he commented that he'd never had a summer vacation with his kids."

Those days are over. Now Cox can travel where and whenever he wants. In late October, the Coxes took a week-long trip to Mexico to attend a wedding.

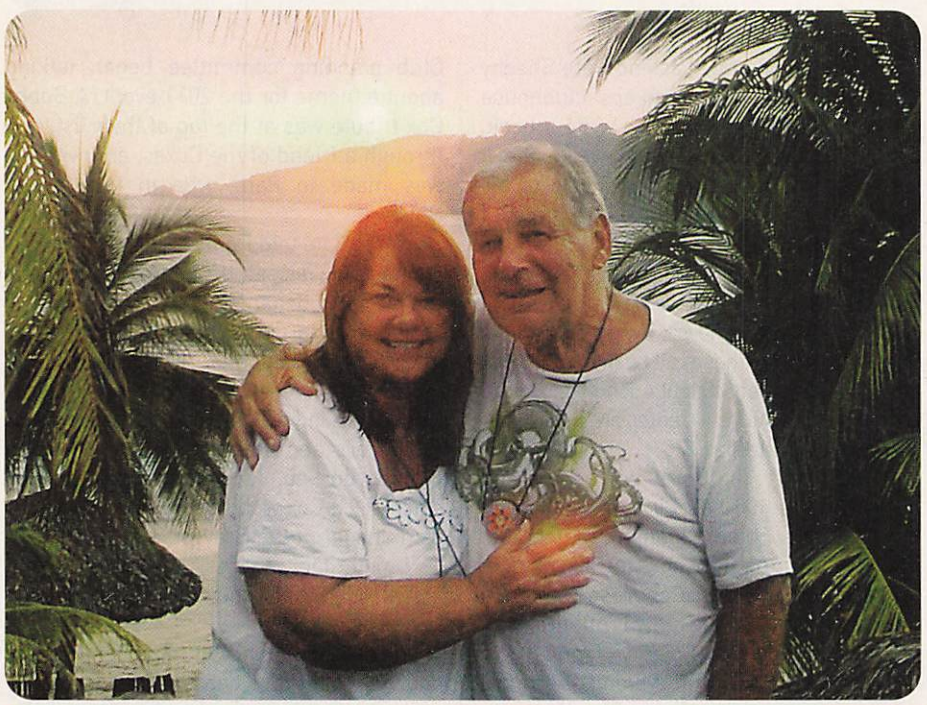
"I was hoping we'd have to forfeit the tickets and hotel rooms," he joked, referring to the Braves' failed attempt to extend their season in the playoffs.

After hearing about the Braves European Academy in the Canary Islands, he got on what Pam described as "a Spain kick," talking about wanting to see the operation, and the area, first-hand.

"I don't really have a 'bucket list,'" he said. "But I've always wanted to travel in Europe and see the great cities. I know there are plenty of places I need to see (in the U.S.) first." And just in case Cox starts balking on travel, Pam booked a cruise for early April, and Braves players also gave the couple a fabulous 10-night Mediterranean cruise as a parting gift.

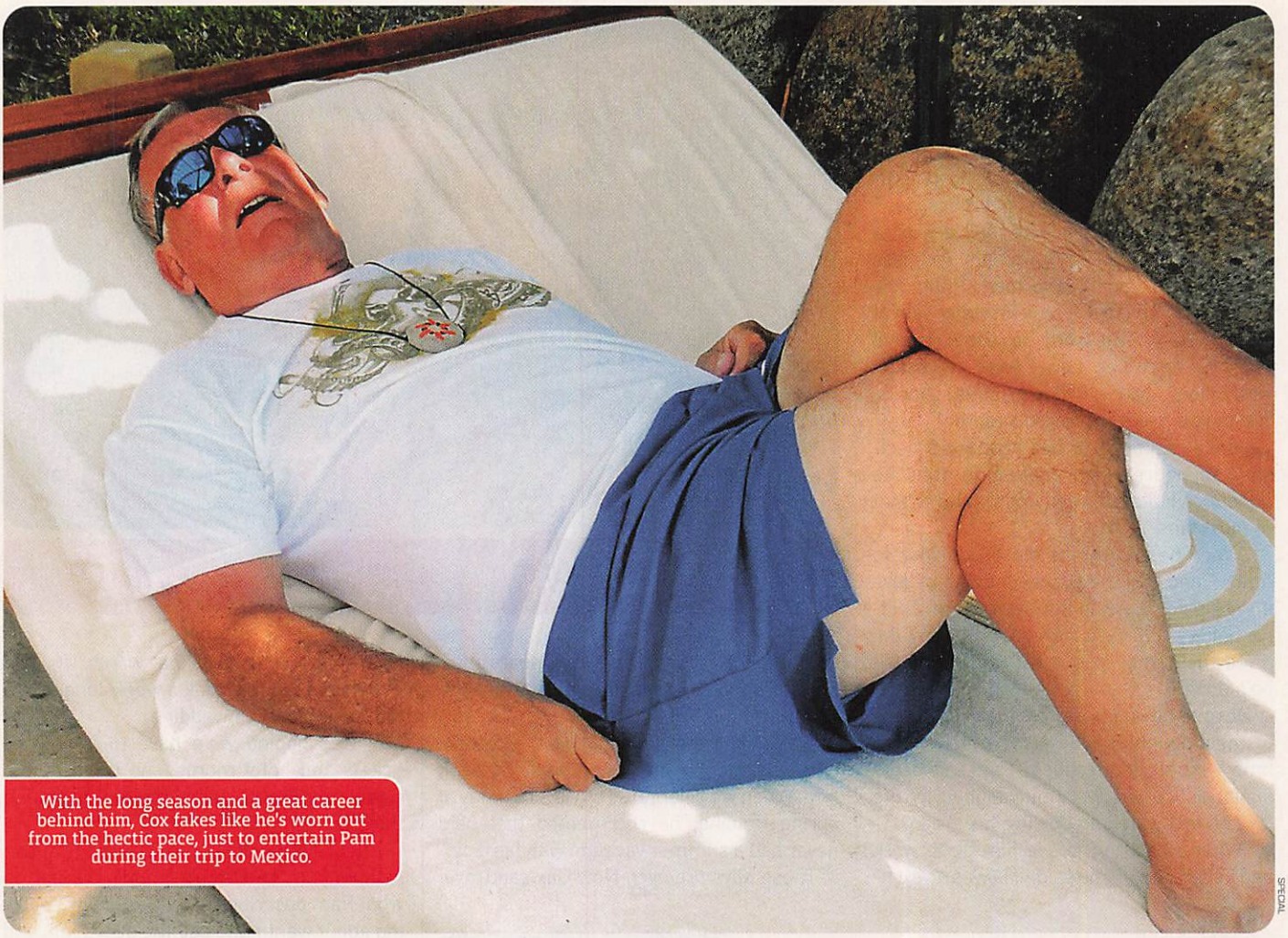
Of course, Cox isn't entirely retired. He has a five-year contract to serve the Braves organization as a special consultant, which, among other things, means he attended organizational meetings held in Orlando in mid-October, front office meetings held at Sea Island, Georgia, in November, and will go to the MLB Winter Meetings in Orlando this month. And he certainly intends to be a presence at spring training.

"I'll be down there," he said. "But it will depend on how much the manager, Fredi Gonzalez, Frank Wren and the guys want me around and how I can help. It's one of the most enjoyable times for players and coaches."



SPECIAL

In late October, shortly after his final game, Bobby and Pam took a week-long trip to Mexico that he hoped they wouldn't be able to make if the Braves advanced in the post-season.



With the long season and a great career behind him, Cox fakes like he's worn out from the hectic pace, just to entertain Pam during their trip to Mexico.

SPECIAL

As far as his new role in the organization, Cox said the only thing he knows for certain is that he doesn't want to be bound by a time schedule. Beyond that, he is fairly vague.

"In talking to Frank, I can be as involved as I want to be, as much as I want to do," he said. "But if asked, I can scratch my brain and give a decent answer."

One thing Cox was definitely looking forward to was reconnecting with his scouting and player development roots by surveying young talent at the Braves minor league affiliates during the season.

Both the Class-A team in Rome and the Triple-A team in Gwinnett are not far from the Coxes' farm in Adairsville, Ga., or their home in the Atlanta suburb of Marietta, and the other farm clubs, all located in the Southeast, are easily accessible, too. The Coxes plan to split time between their two residences.

And for now, don't look for a Bobby Cox tell-all memoir in the bookstores any time soon. That type of project isn't Cox's style.

"I had a lot of offers to do a book," he said. "But I remember asking Pete Sheehy (long-time New York Yankees clubhouse attendant) if he was going to write a book, because if anyone was going to write one, it would be him. He tapped the side of his head and said, 'It's going to the grave.' I think mine will, too."

Perhaps the best chance fans have of hearing directly from Cox will be at occasional public events where he is honored or asked to speak. The first of these will be the 7th Annual Hot Stove Banquet & Silent Auction on Jan. 28 at the Holliday Alumni Center on The Citadel campus in Charleston, S.C.

A week later, the Coxes will be honored at the Braves 400 Fan Club annual winter banquet, the Eddie Glennon Gameboree. The event will be held on Saturday, Feb. 5, at the Georgia World Congress Center, a venue located in downtown Atlanta with room to accommodate plenty of fans.

"The theme for the evening is simply 'Honoring Bobby Cox,'" said Rick Wheeler, 400 Club president.

Early last spring, members of the 400 Club planning committee began talking about a theme for the 2011 event. A Bobby Cox tribute was at the top of their list, and through a friend of the Coxes, an invitation was made to Pam, who in turn asked Bobby.

"I'm in!" he told Pam.

The date was set, the venue booked, and the planning began.

"It's really a fan's night to say thank you and to honor Bobby," said Wheeler who envisions an evening of reminiscences about Cox's years in baseball, on and off the field.

Pitchers and catchers report to spring training on Feb. 13, and for the first time since 1991, Cox won't be reporting to camp as manager of the Braves.

"I might feel twinges," he said. "It might feel strange, but I know it was time for me to go."

For Pam, the peace of mind comes from knowing that retirement was his decision.

"He picked his own time," she said. "He wanted a chance to go out while things were still good. And what a way to go!"

Smoltz Credits Cox - As GM And Manager - For Changing His Career And His Life

BY PATTY RASMUSSEN

IN AUGUST 1987, the second year of his tenure as Braves general manager, Bobby Cox traded right-handed pitcher Doyle Alexander to the Detroit Tigers for one of their top prospects, another right-handed pitcher named John Smoltz.

"In hindsight that looked like a great trade," said Smoltz. "But back then, it was probably a pretty gutsy move."

Smoltz uses the word "gutsy" time and time again to describe his former manager.

"He managed from his gut, his instincts," said Smoltz. "But he was so smart, so well-informed about his players and the teams he was competing against, that he was usually successful."

Cox was successful but often underestimated and certainly under-appreciated, according to Smoltz.

"I've watched him make decisions - be it personnel, players or managerial - that have been scrutinized and criticized, only to watch everything come full circle by the end of a day or a news cycle," he said.

Smoltz's exhibit A: His own career. In 1991, Smoltz had a 2-11 record and 5.16 ERA at the All-Star break.

"My record looked pretty bad, but I wasn't pitching that bad," he said. "It was always just one inning. I was losing it in one inning. Everyone, from coaches, to scouts, to development guys, was probably telling (Cox), 'Send Smoltz back to the minors.' But he didn't waver or, if he did, he never let me know. He just kept giving me a chance. He saw a development in my pitching, and he stuck with it."

Buoyed by the confidence shown by his manager and a few techniques learned from a sports psychologist, Smoltz turned his season around, putting up a 12-2 record with a 2.62 ERA in the second half, a major factor in the Braves' stunning first-place finish. Though hardly his finest season - he finished with a 14-13 record- Smoltz said all the success that came afterwards, both starting and relieving, was a result of the loyalty shown by Cox in 1991.

"He never said, 'I believe in you,' in so many words. That's not his style," said Smoltz. "But he showed it to me every time he stuck with me, and I never, ever forgot that."

Although he played on the 1991 Worst to First team, the 1995 World Championship team, and the over-achieving 1999 Braves who made it all the way to the World Series only to be swept in four games by the Yankees, Smoltz believes the 2010 season was Cox's greatest job managing.

"I only saw it as a fan and a broadcaster, but when you think of where this team was, enduring the 9-game losing streak in April, looking pathetic, then out of nowhere they start reeling off victory after victory," he said. "This team was surreal. You'd shake your head and say, 'No way can this continue.'"

Smoltz said he was as surprised as the rest of the baseball world that Cox led his team of seasoned veterans and young players still wet-behind-the-ears to the playoffs for the first time in five years.

"The storylines changed for this team at least 15 times over the course of the season," he said. "But Bobby masterfully did what he always does, instilled confidence in a team that had severe weaknesses. He got his players to pull magic out of their caps and survived all the critiques of the 'experts' who finally had to acknowledge his greatness."

Watching Cox in action over the course of his career taught Smoltz to trust his instincts and have confidence in the decisions he makes.

"I learned that you don't have to go nuts to make a point," said Smoltz. "He didn't do that with his players. He set standards and stood by them. He didn't undermine his players. He was loyal and patient. Above all, he was confident. He didn't stick his finger in the wind to find out how to make a decision. His confidence made the decision for him."

Cox also had a sense of humor and enjoyed Smoltz's annual practical joke ritual, bringing in a comedian known as "Mr. Double Speak" to conduct mock television interviews with rookies or players new to the Braves. Cox would often help set up the victim, then stand back and watch the joke unfold.

"He would play along with whatever I wanted to do," said Smoltz. "He was great, but there were times he would reverse on you, too, put his own twist on it so you had to watch yourself!"

Smoltz also has a deep appreciation for Cox's skills as a general manager.

"I think, had he stayed in that role with the Braves, he would have been one of the best GM's of our generation," said Smoltz. "And I don't say that because he traded for me! But it was his philosophy - scouting, player development, and developing pitchers - that built the Braves organization into what it is today."

Asked whether he ever told Cox straight out, "Thank you for bringing me to Atlanta," Smoltz replied, "I tried to do everything possible I could to play for him and win for him, on the field, and behave in such a way off the field, that he would know how much I appreciated coming here. He changed my career and my life."

STORIES OF BOBBY

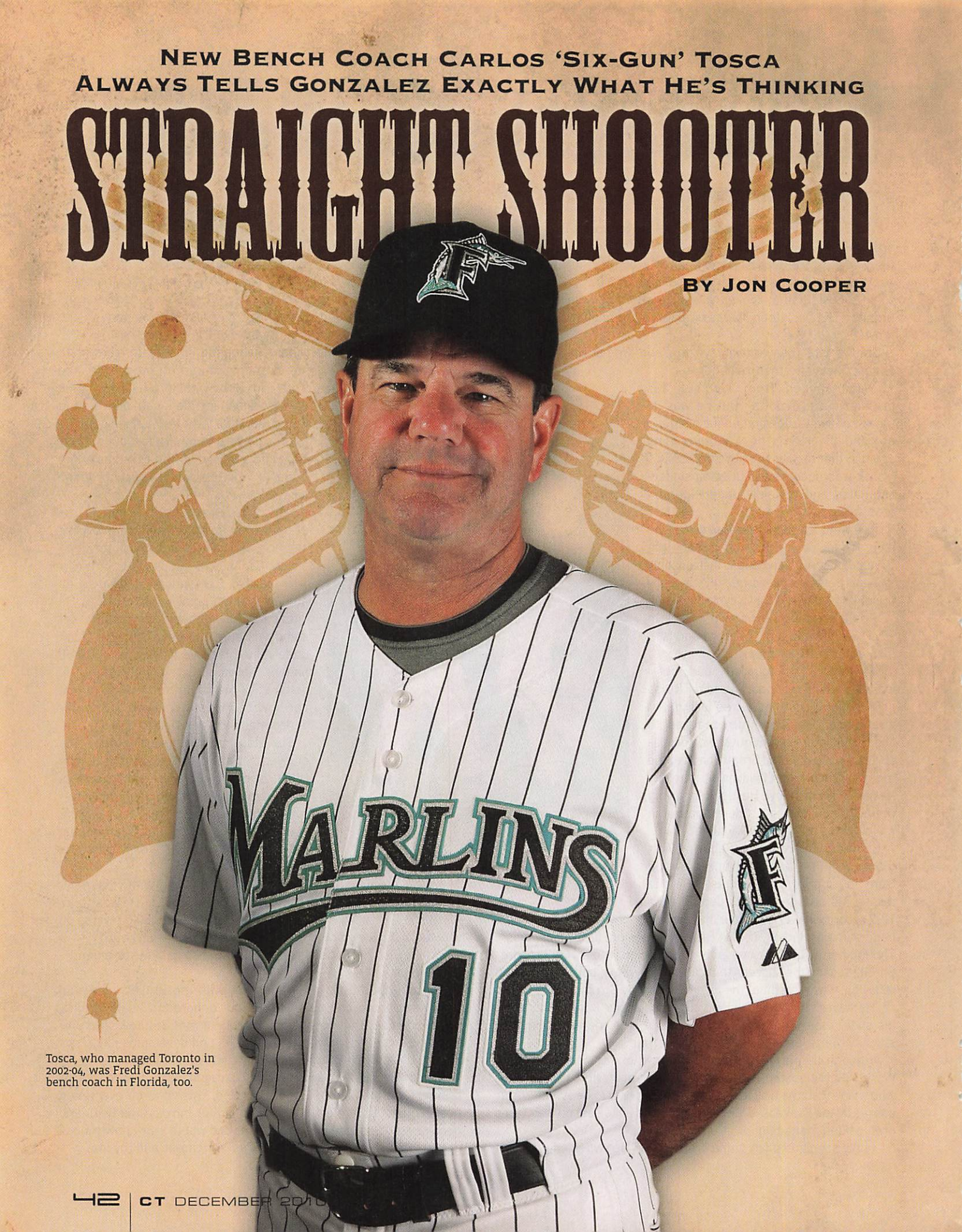
ATLANTA BRAVES

Cox acquired Smoltz from Detroit by trade as general manager and then watched him blossom into a potential Hall of Famer as a manager.

New Bench Coach Carlos 'Six-Gun' Tosca Always Tells Gonzalez Exactly What He's Thinking

STRAIGHT SHOOTER

By Jon Cooper



Tosca, who managed Toronto in 2002-04, was Fredi Gonzalez's bench coach in Florida, too.

Reporters attending the Turner Field press conference at which Fredi Gonzalez was introduced as Braves manager met the announcement of Carlos Tosca as the new bench coach with little fanfare. It didn't even prompt a question.

Not having the media's attention doesn't really matter to Tosca. He has something much more important - the undivided attention of Gonzalez.

Of course, the 57-year-old native of Pinar Del Rio, Cuba, has had that for some 28 years, since Gonzalez was a catching prospect fresh out of high school with the Gulf Coast League Yankees, and Tosca was that team's manager.

As he did then, Gonzalez will bend Tosca's ear for advice in his first season as Braves' manager. Tosca's is a calming, trusted voice, which will serve as a welcome oasis in an occupation that can easily and frequently lead to second-guessing one's self.

"I think sitting in that (manager's) chair, the one thing that you probably need to have is someone that you trust enough, that you know has your best interests in mind," said Tosca, who compiled a 1,163-1,081 record (.518 winning percentage) in 20 years of managing, including a 191-191 mark in a three-season stint as manager of the Toronto Blue Jays. "I'm certainly able to give Fredi my perspective.

"Whether you're a major league manager or whether you're a minor league manager, when you make decisions and you leave that game — whether you've won that game or you've lost that game — you can't turn it off in your mind," he added. "If you would have done this different... if you would have done that different... there are so many variables in the game of baseball.

"It's important that once you've hashed those things out through your brain, you have someone that you feel close enough to run those things by, and have them give you an answer which you know is going to be their honest opinion."

Giving an honest opinion has never been a problem for Tosca, who was interviewed for the vacant manager's job in Pittsburgh. Getting that feedback - positive or negative - is exactly what Gonzalez is counting on.

"When I first got this job and I told him I wanted him to come along, I said, '"Los (for Carlos), I don't want you to be a 'yes man.'" Gonzalez said. "He's not. There will be some nights, whether we win or lose, if I ask him 'What do you think about that?' he'll say, 'I think you screwed up, but the team bailed you out.' So that's always good to have."

Tosca, one of only six major league managers (excluding Ted Turner) not to play any pro ball, got a big laugh when told of Gonzalez's remark, but didn't deny it.

"It goes back to his trust in me and my trust in him and the openness of our relationship," he said. "We can be brutally honest because we both know that our goal is common, that's to win a championship. Just as you do in a family, you have conflicts sometimes and disagreements. It's all for the betterment of the family."

Tosca's willingness to speak his mind earned him the nickname "Six-Gun Tosca" from Baltimore Orioles manager Buck Showalter when Tosca was Showalter's bench coach with the Diamondbacks. It's also earned him respect around baseball.

"I think people always want to hear the truth. We have to sometimes polish that truth. We're not trying to kill people with the truth. But if people know that you are a straight shooter and that you're honest and if they ask your opinion they are going to get your honest opinion."

"I think people always want to hear the truth. We have to sometimes polish that truth," he said. "We're not trying to kill people with the truth. But if people know that you are a straight shooter and that you're honest and if they ask your opinion they are going to get your honest opinion. I think it's important for teamwork, I think it's important for peer relationship, and any relationship."

Tosca's honesty comes from his base of knowledge of the ins and outs of the game gained through the years as an astute observer. He played college ball at the University of South Florida but quickly realized that using his powers of observation as a coach would be the way he could stay around the game he loved.

"I wasn't a very good player," he recalled, with a laugh. "I was an outfielder. I pitched a little bit my freshman year in college. I could run, I could defend, but I had a real tough time with that bat in my hand."

His comprehension of the game impressed his coach at South Florida, the late Jack Butterfield, so much that when Butterfield was hired as farm director for the Yankees, he brought Tosca on board. The rest is history.

Tosca has coached at every level, and preceded Gonzalez at several stops along the way, including at Richmond, then the Braves' Triple-A affiliate in 2002. When Gonzalez got hired by the Florida Marlins as manager in 2003, he brought in Tosca as his right-hand man.

They have their strategizing system in place.

"I'll run stuff by him like two or three innings before it happens," said Gonzalez. "He'll go, 'Okay, I'm with you on that one' or 'How about doing this so that we'll save this guy?' It's two brains. As a bench coach, he helps me more in making moves or putting guys in. We're communicating all the time about the strategy of the game.

"It's a great dynamic," he added. "I can trust him. When we're making a player move, I always involve him. We're usually pretty right on, but sometimes he'll think in a different direction. He's got a big voice."

All Tosca asks is some notice before being asked an opinion.

"I've always told him, 'Ask me things before the fact, not after the fact,'" he said, with a laugh. "So we kind of have that common rule between us. Because we all know you can be second-guessed in this game real easy. After-the-fact stuff usually is, I wouldn't say useless, but I just think it's more important to try to ask for a decision prior to the event happening."

March will make 29 years since that first season Gonzalez and Tosca were together in the Gulf Coast League. As Tosca prepares to take a seat next to one of his best friends, filling the role of his key confident, he says he couldn't have seen how far that wet-behind-the-ears catcher would go at the time, but knew there was something special about him.

"I don't know if you can recognize something that early, but I did know that he did have some special qualities," he said. "You could tell that he had a great passion for the game of baseball and he had fun playing it. Those qualities stick out in my mind. It didn't surprise me that once he stopped playing that he went into coaching and managing. I would have been surprised if he hadn't."

Some things you just know. Anything you don't know and need to know, just ask Carlos Tosca. He'll tell you.

DOUG BENC/ GETTY IMAGES

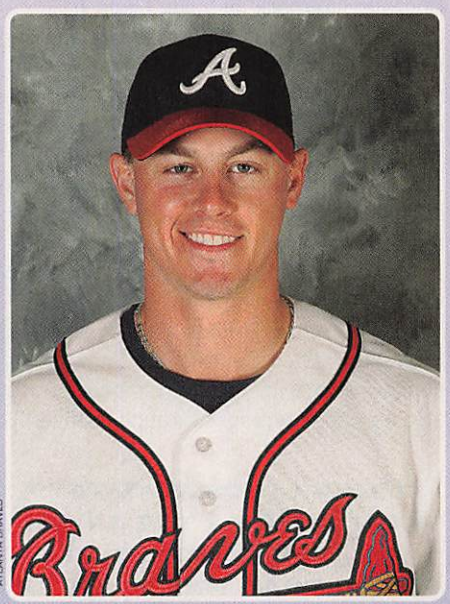
BY BILL BALLEW

PASTORNICKY, HARRILCHAK IMPRESSIVE IN FALL LEAGUE

FREDDIE FREEMAN'S ABSENCE on the Phoenix Desert Dogs' roster due to a thumb injury did not prevent other players in the Atlanta organization from making their presence felt in Arizona.

Shortstop Tyler Pastornicky was named to the Arizona Fall League's Rising Stars Game on Nov. 6. Acquired from the Blue Jays this past summer in the deal that also brought Alex Gonzalez to Atlanta and sent Yunel Escobar to Toronto, Pastornicky has displayed excellent hands and feet on defense, above-average speed, and the ability to hit the ball with consistency. In his first 10 games this fall, he owned a .294 batting average with five RBIs.

"His overall game is impressive," Kemp said. "He's a baseball player. He comes to play every single day, and he did a very nice job after he joined us at the Double-A level. He plays the game the right way and plays hard every night. He has a nice skill set in every facet of the game."



ATLANTA BRAVES

Outfielder Cory Harrilchak, who hit .324 in rookie ball in 2009 at Danville and a combined .287 at Rome and Myrtle Beach this past season, continues to impress in the Arizona Fall League.

In addition to Pastornicky, outfielder Cory Harrilchak was named the AFL Player of the Week for going 9-for-19 (.474) with three home runs and seven RBIs in a five-game stretch. Drafted by the Braves in the 14th round out of Elon University in 2009, Harrilchak split the 2010 season between Class A Rome and Advanced A Myrtle Beach, hitting a combined .287 with 60 runs scored, 26 doubles, eight triples, 47 RBIs and 22 stolen bases.

"Cory has had a great fall league," Kemp said. "(Hitting coach) Jamie Dismuke has said he's swinging the bat very well. We've always thought that he had a really nice stroke. He has one of the better swings in the organization with a real good path to the baseball. He's continuing to improve as a player and making the necessary adjustments to succeed at higher levels."

Five pitchers from the Atlanta organization have seen activity with the Desert Dogs, including Michael Broadway, Kyle Cofield, Erik Cordier, Cory Gearrin and Benino Pruneda.

Gearrin had the most success during the first half. In six relief outings, covering 10 1/3 innings, the righthander allowed no runs and only five hits while striking out seven batters. The product of Mercer University pitched in 52 games out of the bullpen with Gwinnett last season and posted a 3-5 record with a 3.36 ERA.

TURNING OVER EVERY ROCK

The Braves have added depth to the organization by signing a handful of players who saw action in the independent leagues during the 2010 season. Outfielder Beau Torbert joins the Atlanta farm system after earning most valuable player honors in the American Association in 2010. Right-handed pitcher Wes Alsup and first baseman Christian Garcia were ranked by Baseball America magazine as the second- and third-best prospects this past season in the independent ranks.

"There's no rule that guys can't get better after their draft years come and go," Kemp said. "In the case of Torbert and Garcia, both of them were very productive hitters with great statistics in their independent league. Our reports indicate they have good offensive potential, and they received invites to spring training. We'll see how they blend in with our players and where they fit in the organization."

The 27-year-old Torbert was drafted by Houston out of Faulkner University in the 17th round in 2004. After four seasons in the Astros' organization, he was released in spring training in 2008 and proceeded to play three years with the Sioux Falls Fighting Pheasants.

He put together an outstanding season in 2010 by hitting .394 with 24 home runs and 100 RBIs. Upon returning home to Phenix City, Ala., he expressed his desire to give the affiliated ranks another shot. Through mutual friends, word reached pitcher Tim Hudson, who recommended the Braves give Torbert a look.

"This is my last shot," the 6-foot-4, 235-pound Torbert told the Columbus (Ga.) Ledger-Enquirer. "Because of my age and not wanting to really go back to indy league, I was thinking I would just move on. But this is one last shot, and I'm going to do everything I can to take full advantage of it."

Garcia is a 22-year-old first baseman who ranked second in hitting in the American Association in each of the past two seasons by posting averages of .361 in 2009 and .383 last year with Shreveport-Bossier.

Alsup, who signed in time to see activity with the Braves during Instructional League, is a 23-year-old righthander who posted a 2.05 ERA in 26 innings with Joliet

in the Northern League. Alsup underwent Tommy John surgery during his collegiate career and wound up serving as the closer at Tennessee-Martin in 2010. He led the Ohio Valley Conference with seven saves while displaying a fastball that was clocked as high as 97 mph.

A fourth newcomer to the organization is left-handed pitcher Nick Lobanov. A 21-year-old native of Moscow, Russia, Lobanov pitched two years in the Gulf Coast League with Minnesota prior to being released in spring training of 2009.

While he hasn't pitched in the United States since then, Lobanov was named the most valuable player at the European Cup Qualifier in Brest, Belarus, in June when he helped the Moscow North Stars clinch the Russian spot in the tournament. He attracted the Braves' attention during a camp at their European academy in Tenerife, Spain.

WINTER BALL UPDATE

Through early November, 15 players in the Atlanta organization were playing winter ball in either Mexico, Venezuela, the Dominican Republic or Puerto Rico.

Outfielder Matt Young, who was named the team MVP at Navojoa last year while helping the Mayos to a spot in the playoffs, has picked up where he left off this year at Gwinnett. In his first 17 games, Young ranked third in the Mexican Pacific League with a .413 batting average and fourth with a .479 on-base percentage.

Young is one of four Brave farmhands with Navojoa. Third baseman Wes Timmons hit .350 in six games before being placed on the disabled list.

Pitchers Michael Broadway and Jason Lowey also have worked with the Mayos, although Lowey returned to the United States to get married on Nov. 6. Signed late in the 2010 season, Lowey was a non-drafted free agent out of Mercer in 2007 who earned all-star honors three times in the independent Frontier League.

First baseman Barbaro Canizares is also playing in Mexico and owned a .444 batting average through his first seven games with Obregon. Second baseman Luis Boliver (Zulia), catchers J.C. Boscan (Margarita) and Jesus Sucre (Caracas), and pitchers Luis Avilan and Stephen Marek (Lara) are playing in Venezuela. First baseman Mauro Gomez (Este), infielder Diory Hernandez (Escogido) and pitchers Jairo Asencio (Este) and Mariano Gomez (Cibao) are in the Dominican, while Orlando Mercado (Carolina) is the lone Brave in the Puerto Rican League.

I TRY TO FOOL HITTERS BY USING DECEPTION

I FEEL THE 2010 SEASON was a good year. I had a great first half before I started experiencing some adversity around the all-star break. I hit a little bit of a cold streak for a while, but I'm happy with the way everything worked out.

I learned a lot in the second half, especially how to grind it out over the course of a long season by trying to outwork everyone, even when you're tired, in order to stay on top of everything.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Chris Masters was the Braves' 11th-round draft pick in 2009 out of Western Carolina University. In his first taste of professional baseball, the lefthander ranked fifth in the minors with a 1.42 ERA while going 8-4 in 13 outings at rookie-level Danville. In 2010 at Class-A Rome, the 22-year-old Masters led the South Atlantic League in ERA through the first half and earned the starting assignment for the Southern Division in the SAL All-Star Game. Victimized by limited run support, he finished the season 3-11 with a 4.30 in 27 games (26 starts).

Around the middle of the season, I had a minor injury that led to some flaws in my mechanics that were very subtle but made a huge difference. I'm glad it happened, to be honest, because it taught me to be able to identify those flaws and pinpoint the adjustments I need to make.

I feel that as my career progresses, going through that will help me stay more consistent while knowing what I need to do in order to pitch my best.

Last year in the Appalachian League, I was definitely amped to get everything going. Playing at Western Carolina proved to be great in terms of my preparation for pro ball. I went in as a freshman and was able to compete and get a decent amount of innings, which is rare for a first-year player at the Division I level.

I realize my mechanics are a little different and unusual. The coaches I've had with the Braves, both in Danville and Rome, as well as in spring training and Instructional League, have been great to work with.

> "I KNOW PEOPLE HAVE DESCRIBED MY DELIVERY AS BEING HERKY-JERKY, BUT IT'S REALLY JUST MY NATURAL WAY."

I know people have described my delivery as being herky-jerky, but it's really just my natural way. It's kind of strange, but it's a part of me and the way I approach pitching. I try to play to my strengths, which includes a lot of deception and making the hitters uncomfortable.

Hopefully, I can keep fine-tuning some things as I progress through the minor league levels. I'm confident in our staffs and the Braves' management who have tweaked a few things that have really helped me.

I feel like a lot has happened in a short amount of time. In less than a year and a half, I've been able to have success at two levels while making the adjustments and becoming a better pitcher. I'm also getting to play for the hometown team, which is a dream come true.

But I realize, too, that I can't take anything for granted or lighten up at all. I found that out the hard way at the middle of the season when I had that minor injury. I have to give a 110 percent effort every time I take the field or hit the gym to prepare for my next start or the next season.

I realize that's also what's going to separate those who are going to pitch 120 or more innings from those who are going to have arm problems.

Right now, the main thing I'm working on is developing the consistency so that every time I take the mound I can keep my team in the game. Every time I step out there, even if I don't have my best stuff, being able to bear down mentally and keep the game within reach is what's going to allow me to keep moving up.

I can't control whether or not I earn the "W," but I can control how I pitch. I'm working on applying that principle to my game, and that approach has really taught me a lot.

2011 FARM SCHEDULES

Gwinnett Braves
International League
Triple A

COOLRAY FIELD
(678) 277-0300
GWINNETTBRAVES.COM

APRIL

7-10	Durham
11-13	Norfolk
14-15	Charlotte
16-18	at Durham
19-22	at Norfolk
23-25	at Charlotte
26-29	Columbus
30	Scranton/Wilkes-Barre

MAY

1-3	Scranton/Wilkes-Barre
5-8	at Rochester
9-12	at Pawtucket
13-16	Toledo
17-20	Rochester
21-24	at Lehigh Valley
26-29	at Buffalo
30	Lehigh Valley

JUNE

1-2	Lehigh Valley
3-6	Buffalo
7-10	at Toledo
11-14	at Indianapolis
16-19	Durham
20-23	Syracuse
24-27	at Columbus
28-30	at Louisville

JULY

1	at Louisville
2-3	at Durham
4-5	Durham
6-7	at Charlotte
8-10	Charlotte
11-13	All-Star break
14-17	Norfolk
18-21	Louisville
22-25	at Norfolk
26-29	at Durham
30-31	Indianapolis

AUGUST

1-2	Indianapolis
4-5	at Charlotte
6-7	Charlotte
8-11	at Scranton/Wilkes-Barre
12-15	Pawtucket
16-19	at Syracuse
20-21	at Charlotte
22-23	Charlotte
25-28	Norfolk
29-30	at Durham
31	at Norfolk

SEPTEMBER

1	at Norfolk
2-3	at Charlotte
4-5	Charlotte

Mississippi Braves
Southern League
Double A

TRUSTMARK PARK
(888) 272-8374
MISSISSIPPIBRAVES.COM

APRIL

7-11	West Tenn
13-17	at Mobile
18-22	at Birmingham
23-27	Montgomery
28-30	Huntsville

MAY

1-2	Huntsville
3-7	at Chattanooga
9-13	West Tenn
14-18	Jacksonville
19-23	at West Tenn
24-28	at Tennessee
30	Mobile

JUNE

1-3	Mobile
4-8	at Montgomery
9-13	Chattanooga
15-19	at Jacksonville
20-22	All-Star break
23-27	Mobile
29-30	at Huntsville

JULY

1-3	at Huntsville
4-7	West Tenn
8-11	at Mobile
13-18	Tennessee
20-24	at Jacksonville
26-30	Mobile
July 31	at West Tenn

AUGUST

1-4	at West Tenn
5-9	Carolina
10-14	at Mobile
16-20	Huntsville
21-25	at Montgomery
26-30	Birmingham

SEPTEMBER

1-5	at Carolina

Lynchburg Hillcats
Carolina League
Advanced Class A

CALVIN FALWELL FIELD
(434) 528-1144
LYNCHBURGHILLCATS.COM

APRIL

8-10	at Potomac
12-14	at Salem
15-17	Myrtle Beach
18-19	Salem
20	at Salem
21-24	at Frederick
25-28	Wilmington
29-30	Kinston

MAY

1	Kinston
2-4	at Wilmington
5-8	at Winston-Salem
10-12	Frederick
13-15	at Myrtle Beach
16-19	at Kinston
20-22	Potomac
23-25	Winston-Salem
27-29	at Potomac
30-31	at Salem

JUNE

1-2	at Salem
3-5	Myrtle Beach
6-9	Salem
10-12	at Frederick
13-15	Wilmington
16-19	Kinston
20-22	All-Star break
23-25	at Wilmington
26-28	at Winston-Salem
29-30	Frederick

JULY

1	Frederick
2-5	Myrtle Beach
6-8	at Kinston
9-11	Potomac
13-16	Winston-Salem
17-20	at Potomac
21-23	at Salem
25-28	at Myrtle Beach
29-31	Salem

AUGUST

2-4	at Frederick
5-7	Wilmington
8-10	Kinston
11-14	at Wilmington
15-17	at Winston-Salem
18-21	Frederick
23-25	at Myrtle Beach
26-28	at Kinston
30-31	Potomac

SEPTEMBER

1-2	Potomac
3-5	Winston-Salem

Rome Braves
South Atlantic League
Class A

STATE MUTUAL STADIUM
(706) 378-5144
ROMEBRAVES.COM

APRIL

7-10	Hagerstown
11-14	Augusta
15-18	at Charleston
19-23	at Greensboro
25-29	Asheville
30	Hagerstown

MAY

1-3	Hagerstown
5-8	at Savannah
9-12	at Augusta
13-16	Savannah
17-19	at Asheville
20-23	Hickory
25-28	at Lexington
29-31	Augusta

JUNE

1-4	at Charleston
5-7	at Kannapolis
9-11	Greenville
12-15	at Savannah
16-19	Lexington
20-22	All-Star break
23-26	at Asheville
27-30	Savannah

JULY

1-3	Charleston
4-6	at Savannah
7-10	Greenville
12-15	at Kannapolis
16-18	at Greenville
20-22	Delmarva
23-26	Kannapolis
28-31	at Lexington

AUGUST

1-4	Greenville
5-8	at Augusta
10-13	Asheville
14-17	at Greenville
18-21	at Asheville
22-25	Savannah
26-30	Kannapolis

SEPTEMBER

1-5	at Augusta

braves.com is where Braves fans go

Get official gear, follow breaking news, buy tickets, watch live baseball on MLB.TV, follow live action on Gameday, listen live on Gameday Audio and stay connected with MLB.com Mobile Team and Video Alerts.

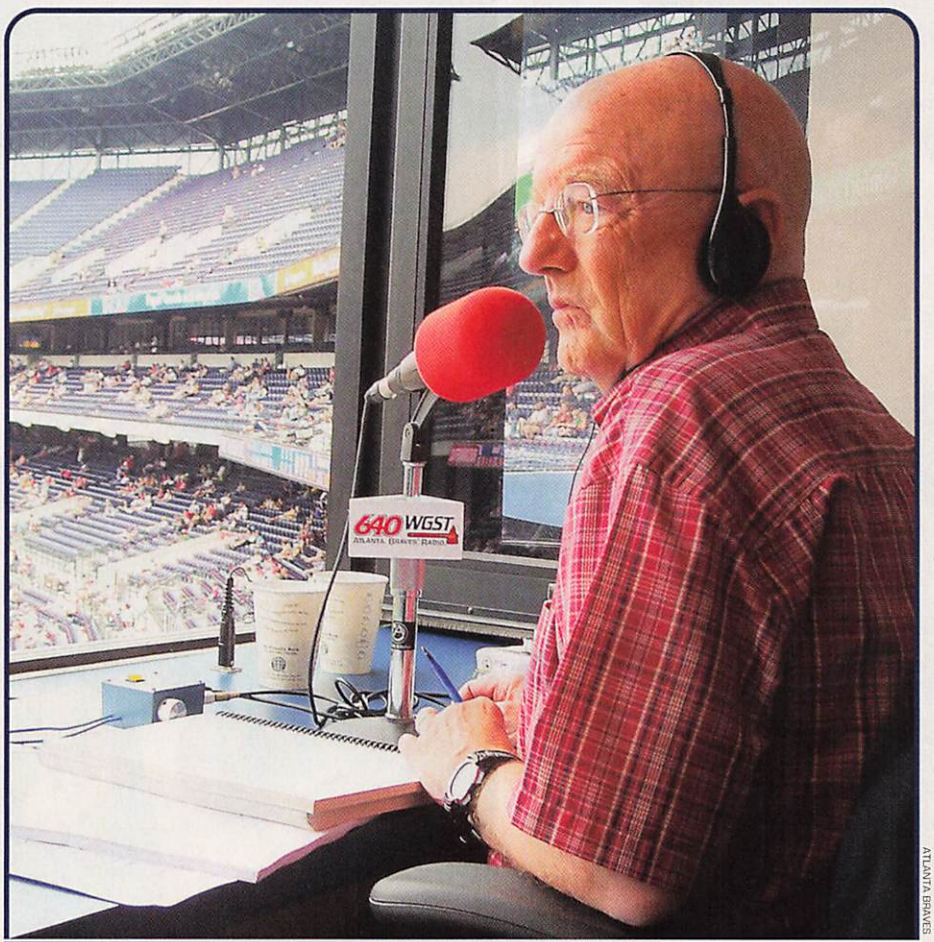
Braves shop · MLB.TV · MLB.com · MLB.com/mobile · GAMEDAY AUDIO · MLB.com gameday · bravesbeisbol.com

© 2009 MLB Advanced Media, L.P. Major League Baseball trademarks and copyrights are used with permission of the applicable MLB entities. All rights reserved. Photo: Getty Images.

FOR PETE'S SAKE

Franchise Hall Of Fame Broadcaster Van Wieren Undergoing Treatment For Lymphoma

BY MARK BOWMAN
OF MLB.COM



ATLANTA BRAVES

Pete Van Wieren, a native of Rochester, N.Y., who attended Cornell University, began calling Braves games in 1976, and in 2004, he was inducted into the Braves Hall of Fame, along with longtime partner Skip Caray.

LEGENDARY BRAVES BROADCASTER

Pete Van Wieren has vowed that he will be at Turner Field for next season's home opener. But before making his preparations for the 2011 season, he will have to once again deal with the mental and physical fatigue created by his battle against cutaneous B-Cell lymphoma.

Van Wieren was first diagnosed with lymphoma around the beginning of this year after finding a rash on the top of his head. After a few rounds of chemotherapy treatment, he found himself cancer-free until about a month ago, when he located a couple of rashes and bumps on his back and leg.

Once biopsies showed the lymphoma had returned, doctors prescribed a more aggressive six-week chemotherapy treatment that Van Wieren began in late October. The 66-year-old former broadcaster said there have already been some signs of improvement. More importantly, it appears the cancer has remained relegated to his skin and hasn't entered his lymph nodes.

"They're still pretty confident they can get it," Van Wieren said. "This is certainly not what I planned to do when I retired."

When Van Wieren ended his 33-year career as a Braves broadcaster after the 2008 season, he envisioned traveling the world with his wife and having more time to watch his grandchildren grow. Those opportunities have been interrupted by these radiation treatments that until a month ago seemed to be a part of his past.

Van Wieren said he first noticed the spots on his back around the same time that he served as the emcee for the Bobby Cox Tribute that was staged at Turner Field before the Oct. 2 game against the Phillies.

"It's a bummer," Van Wieren said. "It's certainly not fun. I'm going to get through it. I will be there for Opening Day next year."

When Van Wieren retired two years ago, he said his decision wasn't solely based on the fact that just two months earlier, he dealt with the painful passing of his longtime friend and broadcast partner Skip Caray. The two joined the Braves broadcast team together in 1976 and became two of the most identifiable figures in the organization during the days that Braves games were beamed to a national audience on TBS. They were both inducted into the Braves Hall of Fame in 2004.

But Van Wieren admitted that Caray's passing did reinforce his belief that he didn't want to continue handling the daily duties of a long baseball season until he reached a point where he was unable to enjoy other facets of life.

While obviously distraught about the fact that he once again finds himself battling cancer, Van Wieren's spirit and passion for baseball still appears bright. Among other things, he was excited about seeing former Braves outfielder Jeff Francoeur compete in this year's World Series for the Texas Rangers.

At the same time, Van Wieren is already looking forward to the opportunity to overcome this latest battle and once again have the chance to fulfill his passion to compete in poker tournaments.

"As soon as I'm done with this, I'm going back to Tunica [Miss.] and the poker tables," Van Wieren said. "I can guarantee you that."

TICKETING

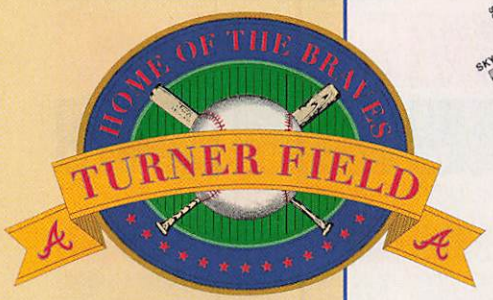
TO PURCHASE TICKETS OR FOR TICKET INFORMATION, CALL (404) 577-9100 OR VISIT braves.com

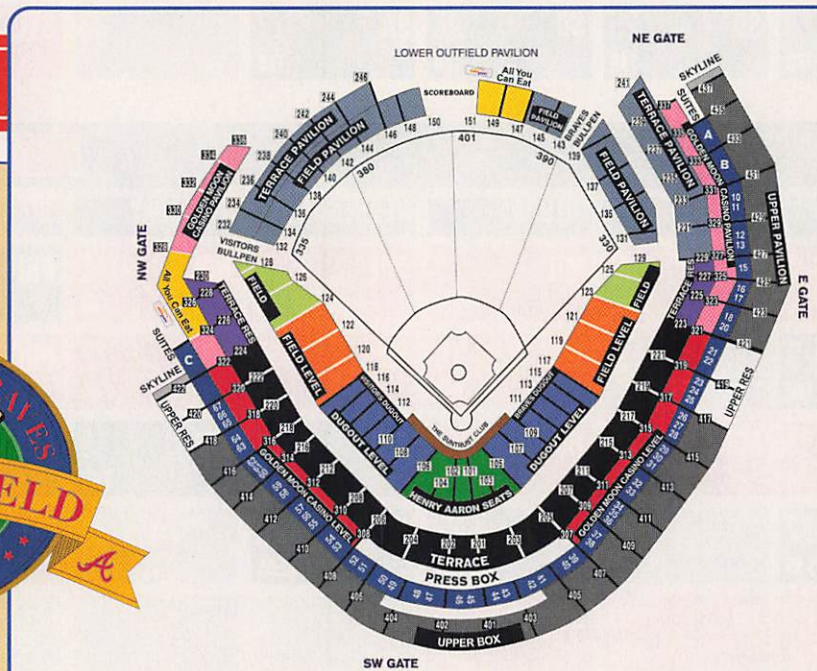
TICKET INFO

The Braves had not announced 2011 ticket information at press time. However, deposits of $250 per seat are being accepted for season tickets at braves.com. Inquire about deposits on partial season tickets and other plans, including group seats, suites and hospitality area space.

FANTASY CAMP

The Atlanta Braves Inaugural Fantasy Camp will be held Jan. 25-30, at the Braves' spring training facility at ESPN's Wide World of Sports in Kissimmee, Fla. Among the former Braves who will be participating are **Steve Avery**, **Mike Bielecki**, **Sid Bream**, **Brad Clontz**, **Marquis Grissom**, **Javy Lopez**, **Greg McMichael**, **Otis Nixon**, **Greg Olson**, **Pete Smith** and **Zane Smith**. The five-day, five-night camp includes hotel accommodations, big league clubhouse service and training staff, daily training and skills sessions with alumni, personalized authentic uniforms for games and batting practice, breakfast and lunch, a welcome party and an awards banquet. The Braves Fantasy Camp is open to men and women ages 25-and-older and costs $3,999. To register, visit braves.com/fantasycamp.





MUSEUM & TOUR INFO

The Ivan Allen Jr. Braves Museum features more than 600 Braves artifacts that trace the team's history from its beginnings in Boston (1871-1952) to Milwaukee (1953-65) to Atlanta (1966-present). It is located on the northwest side of Turner Field at aisle 134. The museum opens two and a half hours before each game and closes in the middle of the seventh inning. The museum is open year-round and is the starting point of one-hour guided tours of Turner Field. Tours leave on the hour.

Tour reservations are not necessary for individuals or groups of less than 20 people. Tickets can be purchased the day of the tour at the main ticket window. Free parking in the Green lot.

Admission to the museum during games is one token ($2) and $5 on non-game days. Tour tickets are $12 for adults, $7 for children and $10 for groups of 20 or more. Walk-up tickets can be purchased at the ticket window. Groups of 20 or more and school groups must make reservations two weeks in advance by calling (404) 614-2311.

HOURS OF OPERATION

OCTOBER -MARCH

MONDAY - SATURDAY	10 A.M. - 2 P.M.
NOV. 25	CLOSED
DEC. 23-JAN. 3	CLOSED
JAN. 17	CLOSED

APRIL - OCTOBER

Monday - Saturday	9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Sunday	1 - 3 p.m.

TOUR TICKETS

ADULTS	$12
CHILDREN 13 AND UNDER	$7
MILITARY	$7
GROUP	$10

SCHOOL GROUP PRICES

CHILDREN	$5
ADULTS	$7

*Subject to change

Tours not available when the Braves have afternoon home games

Tentative and subject to change
Game times and broadcast information to be determined, except where noted.

Braves 2011 SCHEDULE

MARCH | APRIL

HOME | AWAY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
27	28	MINN 29 (Exhibition) 7:00	MINN 30 (Exhibition) 12:00	WAS 31 (Season Opener) TBD	1	WAS 2 TBD
WAS 3 TBD	MIL 4 2:10	MIL 5 8:10	MIL 6 8:10	MIL 7 1:40	PHI 8 (Home Opener) 7:30	PHI 9 7:00
PHI 10 1:30	11	FLA 12 7:00	FLA 13 7:00	FLA 14 7:00	NYM 15 7:30	NYM 16 7:00
NYM 17 1:30	LAD 18 TBD	LAD 19 TBD	LAD 20 TBD	LAD 21 TBD	SF 22 TBD	SF 23 TBD
SF 24 TBD	SD 25 TBD	SD 26 TBD	SD 27 TBD	28	STL 29 7:30	STL 30 7:00

MAY

HOME | AWAY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
STL 1 1:30	MIL 2 7:00	MIL 3 7:00	MIL 4 7:00	MIL 5 7:00	PHI 6 7:05	PHI 7 TBD
PHI 8 TBD	9	WAS 10 7:00	WAS 11 7:00	WAS 12 7:00	PHI 13 7:30	PHI 14 7:00
PHI 15 1:30	HOU 16 7:00	HOU 17 1:00	ARZ 18 9:40	ARZ 19 9:40	LAA 20 10:05	LAA 21 9:05
LAA 22 3:35	23	PIT 24 7:05	PIT 25 12:35	26	CIN 27 7:30	CIN 28 7:00
CIN 29 1:30	SD 30 1:00	SD 31 7:00	1	2	3	4

JUNE

HOME | AWAY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
29	30	31	SD 1 7:00	2	NYM 3 7:10	NYM 4 7:10
NYM 5 1:10	6	FLA 7 TBD	FLA 8 TBD	FLA 9 TBD	HOU 10 8:05	HOU 11 7:05
HOU 12 2:05	HOU 13 8:05	NYM 14 7:00	NYM 15 7:00	NYM 16 7:00	TEX 17 7:30	TEX 18 7:00
TEX 19 1:30	TOR 20 7:00	TOR 21 7:00	TOR 22 1:00	23	SD 24 TBD	SD 25 TBD
SD 26 TBD	SEA 27 10:10	SEA 28 10:10	SEA 29 3:40	30	1	2

JULY

HOME | AWAY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
27	28	29	30	31	BAL 1 7:30	BAL 2 7:00
BAL 3 1:30	COL 4 7:00	COL 5 7:00	COL 6 7:00	COL 7 1:00	PHI 8 7:05	PHI 9 TBD
PHI 10 TBD	11	ALL-STAR GAME @ ARI 12 TBD	13	14	WAS 15 7:30	WAS 16 7:00
WAS 17 1:30	COL 18 8:40	COL 19 8:40	COL 20 8:40	COL 21 3:10	CIN 22 TBD	CIN 23 TBD
CIN 24 TBD	PIT 25 7:00	PIT 26 7:00	PIT 27 7:00	PIT 28 7:00	FLA 29 7:30	FLA 30 7:00
FLA 31 1:30	1	2	3	4	5	6

AUGUST

HOME | AWAY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
31	WAS 1 TBD	WAS 2 TBD	WAS 3 TBD	4	NYM 5 7:10	NYM 6 7:10
NYM 7 1:10	FLA 8 TBD	FLA 9 TBD	FLA 10 TBD	11	CHC 12 7:30	CHC 13 7:00
CHC 14 1:30	SF 15 7:00	SF 16 7:00	SF 17 7:00	SF 18 7:00	ARI 19 7:30	ARI 20 7:00
ARI 21 1:30	CHC 22 TBD	CHC 23 TBD	CHC 24 TBD	CHC 25 TBD	NYM 26 7:10	NYM 27 7:10
NYM 28 1:10	29	WAS 30 7:00	WAS 31 7:00	1	2	3

SEPTEMBER

HOME | AWAY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
28	29	30	31	WAS 1 7:00	LAD 2 7:30	LAD 3 7:00
LAD 4 1:30	PHI 5 7:05	PHI 6 7:05	PHI 7 7:05	8	STL 9 8:15	STL 10 7:15
STL 11 2:15	FLA 12 7:00	FLA 13 7:00	FLA 14 12:00	15	NYM 16 7:30	NYM 17 7:00
NYM 18 1:30	FLA 19 TBD	FLA 20 TBD	FLA 21 TBD	22	WAS 23 TBD	WAS 24 TBD
WAS 25 TBD	PHI 26 7:00	PHI 27 7:00	PHI 28 7:00	29	30	1

Spring Training TICKETING & SCHEDULE

INDIVIDUAL TICKETS

Individual game tickets for the Braves' home spring training games go on sale Saturday, Jan. 8, at 10 a.m. through Ticketmaster (800) 745-3000 and ticketmaster.com and at the ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex box office.

$30-42 - Lower Level Reserved
$24-34 - Upper Level Reserved
$24-34 - Bleacher Level Reserved
$10-20 - General Admission Lawn

* Individual game ticket prices vary by game, date and opponent. There is an additional $3 charge for day-of-game purchases.

GROUP TICKETS

Groups of 10 or more should call (407) 939-GAME (4263) as soon as possible to reserve the best possible seat location to avoid sellouts.

SEASON TICKETS

$495 - Lower Level Reserved
$360 - Upper Level Reserved
$360 - Bleacher Level Reserved
$180 - General Admission Reserved

SUITES AND HOSPITALITY

Groups ranging in size from 15 to 300 fans can rent a variety of indoor and outdoor locations, ranging from climate-controlled Indoor Luxury Suites (15 to 40 fans) to Open Air Suits (40 fans) and Tented Patio with Stadium Seating (150 to 300 fans). Call (407) 939-GAME (4263) for information.

MINI PLANS

(Seats are located in Upper Level Reserved or Bleacher Reserved section)

4-Game Plan A - $108

Thursday, March 3	Detroit Tigers
Friday, March 4	Toronto Blue Jays
Saturday, March 5	New York Mets
Tuesday, March 8	New York Yankees

4-Game Plan B - $108

Wednesday, March 9	St. Louis Cardinals
Thursday, March 10	St. Louis Cardinals
Saturday, March 12	New York Mets
Sunday, March 13	Houston Astros

4-Game Plan C - $112

Wednesday, March 16	Boston Red Sox
Thursday, March 17	Washington Nationals
Saturday, March 19	New York Mets
Sunday, March 20	Houston Astros

4-Game Plan D - $110

Wednesday, March 23	Florida Marlins
Friday, March 25	Detroit Tigers
Sunday, March 27	Philadelphia Phillies
Monday, March 28	Washington Nationals

ON-FIELD SPECTATOR EXPERIENCE

$75 PER PERSON

The pre-game On-Field Spectator Experience allows fans on the field behind home plate to watch the Braves and their opponents warm up. Warmups run from 10:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. for games starting at 1:05 p.m., and from 3:15 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. for games starting at 6:05 p.m. Limited availability. Batting practice times are subject to change without notice.

CONTACT

For more information on tickets and the schedule, visit espnwwos.com/atlantabraves or call (407) 939-GAME (4263).

LOCATION

ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex is located at Disney World in Lake Buena Vista, Fla., just outside Orlando. It's been the site of Braves' spring training since 1998. The complex hosts more than 300 events a year. It is the leading multi-sport venue for amateur and professional sports in the United States, accommodating 60 different sports and athletes from more than 70 countries.

Designed to take youth sports to the next level, the 220-acre facility features the ESPN Innovation Lab, a real-world testing ground for the ESPN Emerging Technology group to develop ground-breaking on-air products like Ball Track and ESPN Snap Zoom, as well as development of its new 3-D television channel.

In addition, the complex features 56 high-definition cameras (42 robotic, 10 hand-held and four studio) and 40 high-definition video screens, including three jumbo screens, that can capture and display footage from any event taking place at the complex. The camera and video screens, as well as a 20-zone audio system, are controlled through the state-of-the-art production center that features eight edit bays and links to ESPN facilities in Bristol, Conn., New York and Los Angeles.

For more information, visit wdwnews.com.

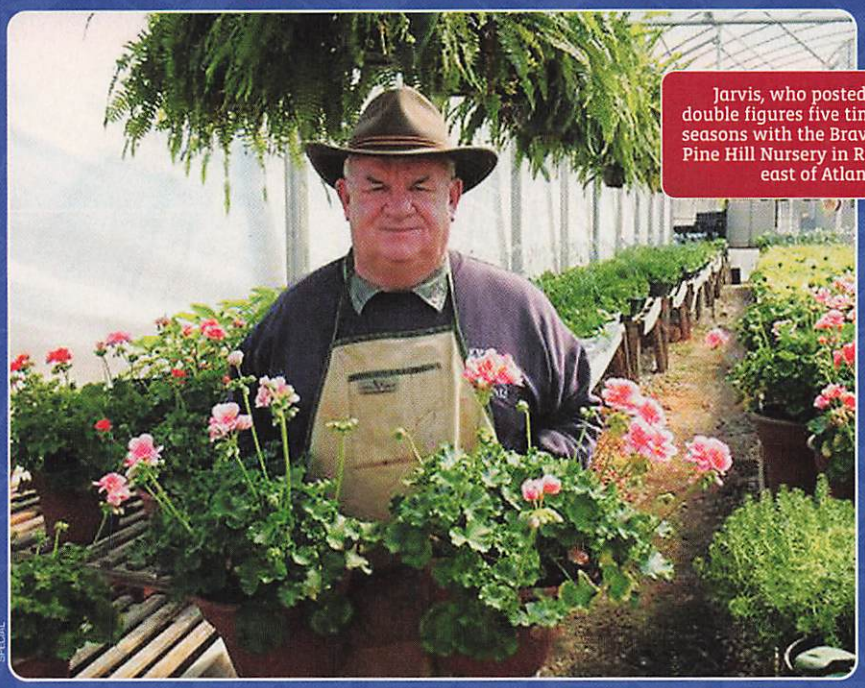
2011 SPRING TRAINING SCHEDULE

FEBRUARY | MARCH

HOME AWAY

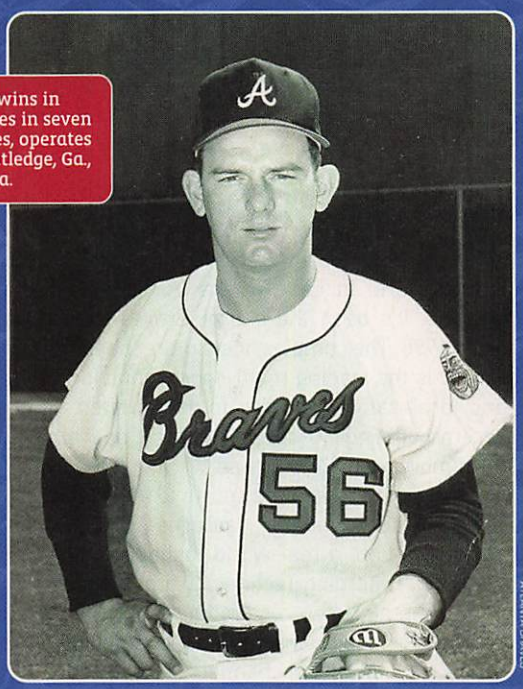
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
20	21	22	23	24	25	NYM 26 1:05
NYM 27 1:05	HOU 28 1:05	HOU 1 1:05	BOS 2 1:05	DET 3 1:05	TOR 1:05 4 *ss / 1:05 WAS	NYM 5 1:05
WAS 6 12:05	FLA 7 1:05	NYY 8 1:05	STL 9 1:05	STL 10 1:05	NYY 11 1:15	NYM 12 1:05
HOU 13 1:05	STL 14 1:05	STL 15 1:05	BOS 16 1:05	WAS 17 6:05	NYM 18 1:10	NYM 1:05 19 *ss / 1:05 DET
HOU 20 1:05	NYM 21 1:10	22	FLA 23 1:05	TOR 24 1:05	DET 6:05 25 *ss / 1:05 PHI	NYM 26 1:10
PHI 27 1:05	WAS 28 6:05	MIN 7:05 29 @ Turner Field	MIN 12:05 30 @ Turner Field	31		

*SS - denotes split squad
All times are Eastern and are subject to change.
All games to be played at Champion Stadium at ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex.



Jarvis, who posted wins in double figures five times in seven seasons with the Braves, operates Pine Hill Nursery in Rutledge, Ga., east of Atlanta.

SPECIAL



ATLANTA BRAVES

THE GARDNER

A Former Workhorse Starting Pitcher, Pat Jarvis Now Labors In His Nursery

BY BRIAN KNAPP

PAT JARVIS thought he was starting a horse farm.

In 2000, the former Braves righthander (1966-72) purchased 43 acres just outside of Newborn, Ga., with the sole intention of raising and rescuing horses. It took little time for Jarvis to discover he had channeled his energy in the wrong direction.

"I messed around in that arena for a while," he said, "and it just wasn't what I wanted to do. I told my wife I was going to put up a greenhouse as a hobby."

With that, Pine Hill Nursery was unexpectedly born.

"I'd go to all these festivals and get a booth, bring my flowers and sell them," said Jarvis, who turns 70 in March. "One thing led to another, and I started getting traffic. I put up another greenhouse, and a local grower came to me. He was expanding his operation, and he asked me if I would grow for him, and we worked out a deal. I started growing big-time then. That's how I developed it."

Four greenhouses, each of them 30 feet wide and 100 feet long, now populate the property, along with 10,000 flats used for growing vegetables and annuals. The nursery services garden centers, Ace Hardware stores, mom-and-pop operations, landscapers and municipalities across the Atlanta area. Jarvis, who hires a handful of part-time workers during the planting seasons, personally delivers his products to customers.

"I always enjoyed seeing things grow, and I was curious to see if I could do it," Jarvis said. "It ended up being pretty successful for me. I do a lot of it by myself. I do the fertilizing, the loading, all that stuff."

The business has not run without hiccups, as influences beyond Jarvis' control have forced him to adapt on the fly at times.

"When the drought hit about three years ago, I had a lot of landscaping business," he said. "Nobody could water, so I switched over to garden vegetables - tomato plants, pepper plants, cucumbers, yellow squash, eggplant. Everything you could put in a garden, I grew in flats out there."

The ongoing recession has also hit Jarvis hard. Much of his work involves selling hanging baskets to churches and schools for fundraisers.

"Most fundraisers are going to get anywhere from 75 to 100 hanging baskets. That's what they'll buy from me, and then they'll mark them up," Jarvis said. "I grew over 1,200 hanging baskets this year, and I probably sold a third of them. Before this year, I've always sold them out. Due to this economy, people are going to buy bread before they're going to buy hanging baskets."

Challenges notwithstanding, Jarvis enjoys the day-to-day interaction with customers, and he credits his grandfather for his interest in gardening.

"He was always a big gardener, and he kind of got me started early back in Illinois," Jarvis said. "I was inquisitive about how he did his garden and asked a lot of questions. I guess it just stuck with me. Just watching a seed grow into a plant and a plant grow into making fruit is interesting to me."

The hard work Jarvis puts into his nursery also served him well on the mound. He played for two teams, the Braves and Montreal

Expos, during his eight-year major league career (1966-73) and holds two dubious claims to fame. He was Nolan Ryan's first strikeout victim in 1966, and he surrendered Ernie Banks' 500th home run in 1970.

Jarvis, who compiled an 85-73 record overall, won 15 games or more three times and enjoyed his best season in 1968, when he went 16-12 with a 2.60 ERA. The Carlyle, Ill., native completed 14 of 34 starts and recorded 157 strikeouts in a career-best 256 innings. For his career, Jarvis yielded more than 100 fewer hits than innings pitched and struck out roughly twice as many men as he walked.

"It all goes back to a dream," he said. "I think I gave everything I could with limited ability. I couldn't believe I made it and did well. It's something you can never take away from me."

Tenacity was perhaps his greatest attribute.

"I'd run through a wall," Jarvis said. "They didn't call me 'Little Bulldog' because I looked like a bulldog. I'd pitch inside. I'd knock hitters down. You could do that then."

Originally signed by the Cubs as an undrafted free agent in 1960, he was traded to the Tigers the following season and then to the Milwaukee Braves in November 1963 for righthander Bruce Brubaker.

After going 6-2 as a rookie in 1966, the Braves' first year in Atlanta, he became a regular in the rotation the following season and remained there for five years in which he averaged 31 starts. When the Braves won the NL West in 1969, he was 13-11 in 33 starts with a 4.43 ERA and started and lost Game 3 of the NLCS against the Mets.

In the winter of 1973, he was traded to Montreal in exchange for Carl Morton. He was relegated to the Expos' bullpen and was traded to Texas the following winter. The Rangers released him during spring training in 1974.

Jarvis, then 33, turned to politics. He worked briefly for Zell Miller, who became governor of Georgia and later a United States senator. Jarvis ran for DeKalb County sheriff in 1976, was elected and spent 20 years in office.

"I had a lot of friends in law enforcement," Jarvis said. "My dad was real involved in my hometown. I put some feelers out ahead of time. I beat 13 guys in the Democratic primary."

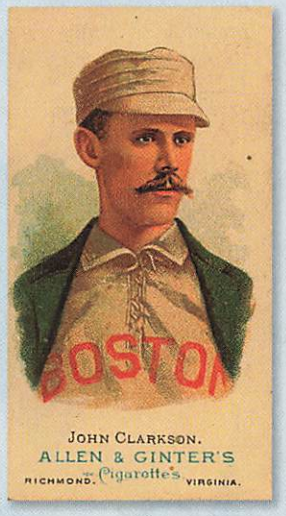
Jarvis later served a 15-month prison sentence on corruption charges associated with management of the DeKalb County jail. He declined to comment on the time he was incarcerated.

Jarvis now resides in the Atlanta suburb of Tucker with his wife, Gail.

BY STEVE FALL

BACK IN TIME WITH BEANEATERS CARDS

FROM 1883 THROUGH 1906, the Braves franchise was known as the Boston Beaneaters. Great Beaneaters teams dominated the National League in the 1890s. Led by Hall of Fame players like Kid Nichols, Hugh Duffy and Jimmy Collins, they finished first five times that decade.



Even though more than a century has passed, there are still collectibles available from those great Boston teams. But locating them presents a challenge.

"They are popular with sophisticated collectors because of the scarcity," said Frank Ceresi of FC Associates, a baseball writer and professional appraiser. "Any baseball antiquity from the turn of the century – the Dead Ball era or even the late 19th century – is highly collectible, very sought after, very expensive, very scarce."

Ceresi said that while game-used equipment or game-worn uniforms from those teams have value, they are difficult to locate. Scorecards, autographs and pennants are other popular Beaneaters collectibles, as well as almost anything from their championship seasons (1891-93, 1897-98).

Nichols, Duffy and Vic Willis, a Hall of Fame pitcher who joined the Beaneaters in 1898, all have valuable collectibles. A Hall of Fame postcard signed by Duffy sold for $2,500 through Hunt Auctions in 2009. He autographed the front of the postcard, which has an image of his plaque in Cooperstown. Ceresi said that signed baseballs by Nichols occasionally become available. He added that Bobby Lowe – a Beaneaters star from 1890 through 1901 – also has appeal.

"If someone was to come up with something representing Bobby Lowe – and he's not even a Hall of Famer – that would be amazing," said Ceresi.

A scorecard from the Beaneaters' 1891 National League championship season was selling on eBay in November for $540. It came from a game versus the Phillies that featured five Hall of Fame players. Nichols, the starting pitcher in that matchup, was the only one with Boston at the time. Hall of Famer Billy Hamilton played for Philadelphia that season, but joined the Beaneaters five years later.

Ceresi recommends collectors interested in the Beaneaters avoid searching for artifacts, because they are so rare. Fortunately, baseball cards from that era are easier to find.

"If you hunt long and hard enough – you can still get the players represented on various cards," said Ceresi. "The Old Judge cards in particular – that came out of the 1880s – will have many of the players who played in the 1880s and 1890s for the Beaneaters."

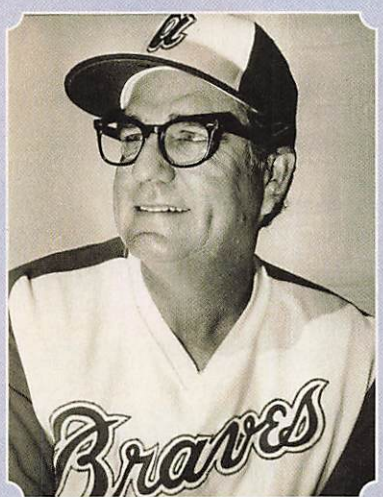
The Old Judge Line was a large tobacco card set produced by Goodwin & Company, according to Lyman Hardeman, the editor for Old Cardboard Magazine. Old Judge became the major baseball card set of the 19th century.

"There are over 500 different players in the set," said Hardeman, whose publication focuses on vintage baseball cards. "Most of the players have multiple poses. It's a historically interesting set, just because it documents so many players from that period."

Allen & Ginter's 1888 N28 set was another of the earliest card sets. It featured only 10 different baseball players, including two Beaneaters who eventually made the Hall of Fame - pitcher John Clarkson (above) and catcher/outfielder King Kelly.

ALUMNI NOTES

Clyde King (MGR, 1974-75) died Nov. 2, in Goldsboro, N.C. at age 86. He replaced Hall of Famer **Eddie Mathews** (3B, 1952-66) as manager with 63 games left in the 1974 season and continued as manager the next year until he was fired after 134 games.



Jeff Francoeur (OF, 2005-09) refused a minor league assignment from the Texas Rangers and cleared waivers to become a free agent.

George Estock (RHP, 1951) died Nov. 7, at age 86.

Ken Oberkfell (2B/3B, 1984-88) was scheduled to interview for the Mets' managerial vacancy. He managed the Mets' Triple-A affiliate the last four seasons.

Ted Simmons (1B/C/3B, 1986-88) was named manager of the Seattle Mariners.

The Yankees' **Mark Teixeira** (1B, 2007-08) won his second Gold Glove. He was removed from the Yankees' post-season roster after he strained a hamstring in Game 4.

The Cardinals named **Derek Lilliquist** (LHP, 1989-90) bullpen coach.

Phil Niekro (RHP, 1964-83, '87) will serve as co-master of ceremonies for the UYC Maritime Foundation Boat Parade of Lights, set for Lake Lanier, north of Atlanta, on Dec. 4. Information about the parade and associated events that sponsor college scholarships is available at lanierparadeoflights.org.

Edgar Renteria (SS, 2006-07) was voted MVP of the World Series, but the Giants declined to pick up the option on his contract, making him a free agent. Renteria asked that a celebration in his honor in his homeland of Colombia be called off and that the money for it be used to help flood victims.

Johnny Antonelli (LHP, 1948-50, '53, '61), who was on the mound in 1954 when the Giants last won the World Series before this year, met fans and signed autographs Nov. 7 at a collectibles show in Webster, N.Y.

John Smoltz (RHP, 1988-99, 2001-08) was among the speakers Nov. 9, for a business and motivational seminar at Philips Area in Atlanta, along with the likes of Laura Bush, Sarah Palin, Bill O'Reilly, Terry Bradshaw and Ben Stein.

Dale Murphy (OF/1B/C, 1976-90) will be the guest speaker Dec. 9, at Georgia Christian School's benefit dinner at Valdosta (Ga.) State University Center. Individual tickets are $75. All proceeds will go to Georgia Christian School. For more information, call (229) 559-5131.

The Atlanta chapter of the Major League Baseball Players Alumni Association held its 25th Annual Charity Reception & Golf Classic Nov. 7-8, at Horseshoe Bend Country Club in the Atlanta suburb of Roswell. The event benefited the Georgia chapter of the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. Scheduled participants were to include **Phil Niekro** (RHP, 1964-83, '87), **Charlie Leibrandt** (LHP, 1990-92), **Pete Smith** (RHP, 1987-93), **Craig Skok** (LHP, 1978-79), **Darrel Chaney** (INF, 1976-79), **Brian Jordan** (OF, 1999-2001, '05-06), **Terry Pendleton** (3B, 1991-94, '96; Coach, 2002-Present), **Alejandro Pena** (RHP, 1991-92, '95) and **Marty Perez** (INF, 1971-76).

BIRTHDAYS

DECEMBER

1ST	GREG MCMICHAEL (44)
	REGGIE SANDERS (43)
2ND	ADRIAN DEVINE (59)
	STEVE SISCO (41)
	PETER MOYLAN (32)
	MARK KOTSAY (35)
3RD	DAVE EILERS (74)
	DAMON BERRYHILL (47)
	PAUL BYRD (40)
	MATT CHILDERS (32)
4TH	LEE BALES (66)
	ALEXIS INFANTE (49)
5TH	GARY ROENICKE (56)
	GERMAN JIMENEZ (48)
6TH	FREDDIE VELAZQUEZ (73)
	AMADO SAMUEL (72)
	ARNOLD UMBACH (68)
	STEVE BEDROSIAN (53)
7TH	OZZIE VIRGIL (54)
8TH	JOHN MIZEROCK (50)
9TH	ED ROMERO (53)
	TONY TARASCO (40)
10TH	BOB PRIDDY (71)
	PAUL ASSENMACHER (50)
	BRANDON JONES (27)
11TH	JOHNNY O'BRIEN (80)
12TH	RALPH GARR (65)
	GREGOR BLANCO (27)
13TH	MIKE MORDECAI (43)
16TH	NEIL CHRISLEY (79)
17TH	CURTIS PRIDE (42)
	MIKE CATHER (40)
18TH	GINO CIMOLI (81)
	JIM CLANCY (55)
	CHRIS SEELBACH (38)
19TH	JOE SLUSARSKI (44)
	RAFAEL SORIANO (31)
20TH	MARC VALDES (39)
21ST	BOB RUSH (85)
	JACK DANIELS (83)
	PAUL CASANOVA (69)
	ROGER MCDOWELL (50)
	BUDDY CARLYLE (33)
	ROYCE RING (30)
22ND	ALEX MONCHAK (91)
	LONNIE SMITH (55)
	GARY COOPER (54)
	DAVID NIED (42)
	REID GORECKI (30)
23RD	DAVE MAY (67)
	PASCUAL MATOS (36)
24TH	KEVIN MILLWOOD (36)
25TH	DICK MANVILLE (84)
	RUBEN GOTAY (28)
26TH	STU MILLER (83)
	WAYNE CAUSEY (74)
	JOHN BRAUN (71)
	RAY SADECKI (70)
	CHRIS CHAMBLISS (62)
	CHARLES THOMAS (32)
	J.C. BOSCAN (31)
	OMAR INFANTE (29)
	MIKE MINOR (23)
28TH	STEVE KUCZEK (86)
	ZANE SMITH (50)
	MELVIN NIEVES (39)
29TH	ROD NICHOLS (46)
	JARET WRIGHT (35)
	JIM BROWER (38)
30TH	FRANK TORRE (79)
31ST	SAM MCCONNELL (35)
	CHRIS REITSMA (33)

ChopTalk
THE OFFICIAL MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE ATLANTA BRAVES

PHONE (404) 614-1573
WEB Braves.com/choptalk

PUBLISHER

GARY CARUSO, President
Wonderdog Publishing, Inc.

EDITORIAL

EDITOR: Gary Caruso

COLUMNISTS: Jay Busbee, Fredi Gonzalez, Jair Jurrjens, Chris Masters, Patty Rasmussen, Ken Rosenthal (FoxSports.com), Frank Wren

REPORTERS: Bill Ballew, Jon Cooper, Steve Fall, Melanie D.G. Kaplan, Brian Knapp, Patty Rasmussen

PHOTOGRAPHERS: Tom Priddy, Patty Rasmussen, Carlos Restrepo, Bill Setliff, Allison Shirreffs, Walter Victor, Rodger Wood

CARTOONIST: Johnny Sajem

PRODUCTION

ART DIRECTOR: Clark Odom

ADVERTISING

SALES:
Richard Burg (770) 978-6297
Doug Campbell (770) 815-7506

PRINTER

Publisher's Press

SUBSCRIBER SERVICES

McMillen Communications

BUSINESS OPERATIONS

Rob Calcutta

OFFICE OF PUBLICATION

12829 Trinity Dr.
Stafford, TX 77477-4214

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

It is the policy of this magazine and its publisher:

1. To contract with individuals on the basis of their qualifications and with assurance of equal opportunity and treatment,regardless of race, color, creed, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, national origin or handicap.
2. To not knowingly accept any advertisement which implies any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, creed, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, national origin or handicap.

ATLANTA BRAVES STAFF

PUBLIC RELATIONS

BRAD HAINJE - Director of Media Relations

BETH MARSHALL - Director of Public Relations

ANDY PRESSLEY - Publications Manager

Jim Misudek, Meagan Swingle, Adrienne Midgley

GARY CARUSO
EDITOR & PUBLISHER

A HOME RUN OF A DEAL

FRANK WREN apparently doesn't believe in the old axiom, "Strike while the iron is hot." Because he struck before the fire was even lit!

Moving boldly and swiftly but with solid thought and planning, Wren strolled into the General Managers' Meetings in Orlando and before everyone had time to pin on their nametags, pulled off a major deal that drastically improves the Braves' long-range artillery for next season.

Dan Uggla and his 30-home-run power is exactly what the Braves need to wake up an oft-slumbering lineup that far too frequently wasted excellent pitching the last two years.

Make no mistake, Uggla is not a Gold Glove second baseman, but he's a Silver Slugger that has done something no other second baseman in history has done - hit 20 or more home runs in each of his first five seasons.

Uggla doesn't stop at 20, though. He's just warming up. Except for his rookie season when he hit "only" 27 home runs, he's hit 31 or more every year since then. Because no Braves hitter has reached 30 home runs since 2006, that's pretty strong.

Of course, Uggla also packs in 150 or so strikeouts per season. But consider that even with 149 strikeouts last year, he hit .287 to go with 33 homers and 105 RBIs, all career highs.

The Braves had to give up Omar Infante, one of the great success stories in baseball last year, and a lefty reliever with a lot of potential in Mike Dunn. But they kept their pitching pretty much intact - both at the major league and minor league level, which is critical for next year and quite a few years after that.

Fredi Gonzalez, of course, managed Uggla for three and a half seasons in Florida, and it's a sure bet that the Braves would not have pursued this deal if Gonzalez didn't hold Uggla in high regard.

The challenge now is for Wren to figure out a way to sign Uggla long term so that he doesn't walk at the end of the season as a free agent. Regardless of how that plays out, though, this is a deal that greatly heightens the anticipation and expectations for next season.

One of the best Braves stories of the past season keeps getting better, even as the calendar year comes to a close. Tim Hudson has been collecting just about every Comeback Player of the Year award in sight, finished fourth in the NL Cy Young voting, and added the prestigious Hutch Award (see page 16) to his resume.

The latter probably is relatively unknown to Braves fans, particularly since no Brave had ever won it until now, but it is a spectacular national confirmation not only of Hudson's pitching feats, but also of the tremendous work Hudson and his wife, Kim, do in the community. It is given for "honor, courage and dedication," and there could be no more worthy recipient.

Further evidence of that comes in Hudson's decision to donate his $20,000 prize for the Players Choice Comeback award - which he wasn't even expecting - to an effort to build a baseball field for wheelchair-bound and special-needs children in Kingsland, Ga., a small town located in southeast Georgia.

Hudson is making the donation in honor of Justin Norris, who died last year from a rare tumor near his brain stem. The Hudsons hosted the youngster in 2006 at Turner Field, as ambassadors for the Make-A-Wish Foundation. The proposed project is called "Justin's Miracle Field" at Lions Park. Call (912) 322-1970 or visit camdenmiracleleague.com to donate to the project.

This issue of ChopTalk was mailed Nov. 24. This is the last printed issue of ChopTalk. Beginning next month, it will only be available digitally. Visit braves.com/choptalk or call (404) 614-1573 for more information.

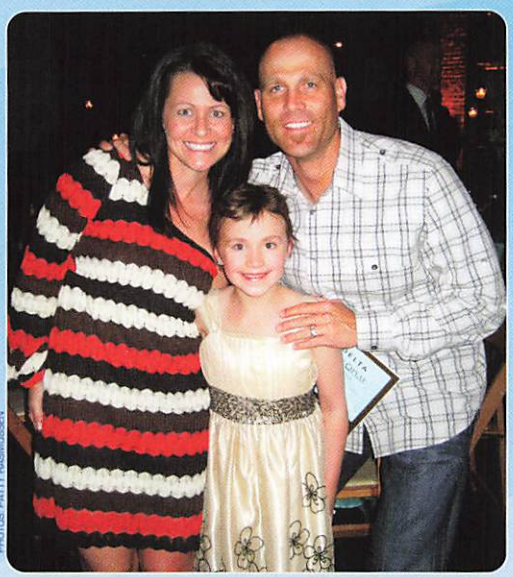
We realize most subscribers aren't pleased with this change, and we completely understand. It is important that you know this was strictly a business decision. The number of subscribers has been steadily decreasing and reached the point where it was financially impossible to continue printing CT in its current form. Thank you for your support through the years.

BEYOND BASEBALL

BY **PATTY RASMUSSEN**

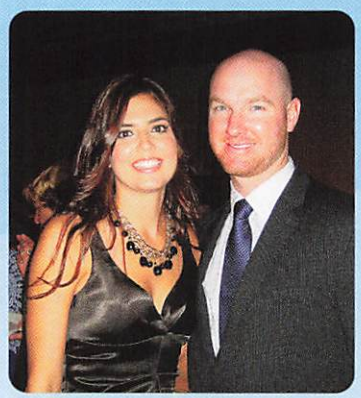
Tim and Kim Hudson make a new friend, Lily Anderson (9), at the Rally Foundation's Benefit Bash, which was attended by several Braves, including (below, R) Jonny Venters and his wife, Viviana.

BIG BASH



PHOTOS: PATTY RASMUSSEN

BRIAN MCCANN AND HIS WIFE, ASHLEY, hosted the Rally Foundation's Benefit Bash Nov. 4. The event was held at the Foundry at Puritan Mill in downtown Atlanta and raised over $325,000 to benefit childhood cancer research. Also in attendance were teammates **Tim Hudson** and his wife, **Kim**, and **Jonny Venters** and wife, **Viviana**, third base coach **Brian Snitker** and his wife, **Ronnie**, and former Braves **Kelly Johnson** with his wife, **Lauren**, and **Andruw Jones** and his wife, **Nicole**. McCann's parents, **Howie** and **Sherry** and Brian's brother, **Brad**, and Atlanta Falcons linebacker **Curtis Lofton** also participated. Nicole Jones bid $5,000 for a dinner for 20 catered by Endive in the live auction. Other live auction items included airfare on Delta Airlines and a weekend at the Atlantis resort in the Bahamas ($5,000), a hunting trip to **Chipper Jones'** Double Dime Ranch in Texas ($6,000), a personal batting practice experience with McCann ($7,000), and a purebred Labradoodle puppy ($8,000). The event raised over $325,000. The second annual Celebrity Softball Game scheduled to take place the following evening at **Russ Chandler** Stadium at Georgia Tech was cancelled due to inclement weather.



BRIAN JORDAN was an All-Star outfielder and a pro football player, but it turns out he's got all the right moves on the dance floor, as well. Jordan took home top honors in the American Cancer Society's "Dance With the Stars of Atlanta" competition, part of the 36th Annual Crusaders' Ball, held Oct. 30 at the Grand Ballroom at the Gwinnett Center. Jordan and his dance partner had to waltz, rumba, and cha-cha their way to the top in order to win the coveted mirror-ball trophy. The event raised $130,000 to fight cancer. "It is such an honor and privilege to show Atlanta why I dance," said Jordan, "to fight this awful disease..."

SPECIAL

Brian Jordan (R) with Vince Bailey, a volunteer with the American Cancer Society and the emcee for the gala.

No, that's not a member of the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, it's 3-year-old **Landri Ross** (top of opposite page), daughter of catcher **David Ross** and his wife **Hyla**, modeling her Halloween costume. The little witch had fun trick-or-treating at the Ross' home in Tallahassee, with her almost 2-year-old brother, **Cole**, who went as a NASA astronaut...

Jason Heyward was spotted in the stands at Philips Arena at the Oct. 21 pre-season NBA game when the Atlanta Hawks hosted the Miami Heat...

Peter Moylan and his fiancée, **Mandi Coupel**, are in Australia for a couple of months visiting his home country and spending some quality and quantity time with the relief pitcher's daughters, **Montana** (10) and **Matisse** (3). Prior to leaving and as promised in the feature story about his tattoos (April 2010 CT), Moylan had more ink added to his arms at **Brandon Bond**'s Atlanta area studio, All or Nothing Tattoos. Fans can find out what Moylan is up to and see exclusive photos by reading his blog, petermoylan.com/blog/, and by following him on Twitter, twitter.com/PeterMoylan...

Braving freezing temperatures, an estimated 2,000-plus people showed up at Turner Field on Nov. 6 to be part of the extras needed to film a movie, "The Change-Up," and to get a glimpse of **John Smoltz**, who had a cameo role. The film stars **Jason Bateman, Ryan Reynolds** and **Olivia Wilde** and been filming in the Atlanta area for months. Contrary to published reports, Smoltz did not throw off the mound. "I was there for seven hours," he said, "for a 45-second role in a movie." The com-

SPECIAL

David Ross' daughter, Landri, casts a spell over the Rosses' Tallahassee neighborhood during Halloween.

pany making the film, Universal Studios, donated $5 to the Atlanta Braves Foundation for every person who showed up to be an extra...

Tim and **Kim Hudson** and family moved into their home near their alma mater, Auburn University in Auburn, Alabama. They've managed to make almost every home football game of the highly rated Tigers and some road games as well...

The December meeting of the Forsyth County Hot Stove League takes place at 7 p.m., Thursday, Dec. 9, at the home of **Johnny Tallant**, in Cumming, Ga. "It's our annual 'Hat Nite,'" said Tallant, a long-time member of the Braves 400 Club. "We all bring a baseball cap in a plastic bag and choose one to take home." Tallant said they hope to have some former Atlanta Crackers and University of Georgia baseball players. For more information, contact Tallant at johnnytallant@comcast.net...

Catie Francoeur, wife of former Braves outfielder **Jeff Francoeur**, started an online gift boutique, The Blushing Apple, offering an array of gifts, home décor and lifestyle items. Found online at theblushingapple.com, the boutique also gives back to the community by choosing a charity each month to donate a portion of their monthly sales...

The **Cindy Donald** Dreams of Recovery Foundation will host its annual Magic Show and Auction Benefit, Jan. 22, from noon to 3 p.m. at the Mountain View Community Center in Marietta. **Bobby Cox**, new manager **Fredi Gonzalez**, and Kansas City Royals manager and former Braves coach **Ned Yost** are members of the Foundation's advisory board and, along with Braves pitching coach **Roger McDowell**, have been supporters of Cindy since she was paralyzed in a car accident in 2005. Cindy attended Lassiter High School, the same high school the Cox and Gonzalez children attended. For more information about the event, visit the foundation website at dreamsofrecovery.org...

Broadcaster **Chip Caray** and his wife, **Susan**, enjoyed a 10-day trip to France, Oct. 29 to Nov. 9, with stops at the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris, the palace at Versailles, side trip to Epernay, the champagne capital of the world, and Giverny and the home of painter **Claude Monet**. The couple even posed in front of the pond that inspired Monet's famed "Water Lilies" series of paintings...

Former Brave **Adam LaRoche** hosted the 2nd Annual Rockin' and Ropin' for Pennies for the Park in Ft. Scott, Kansas. The event raises funds to restore Ellis Park in LaRoche's hometown of Ft. Scott. In addition to a rodeo, country music performer **Luke Bryan** headlined a concert at the Bourbon County Fairgrounds. Among some of the guests at the event were **Chipper Jones** and former Braves outfielder **Ryan Langerhans**.

PATTY RASMUSSEN

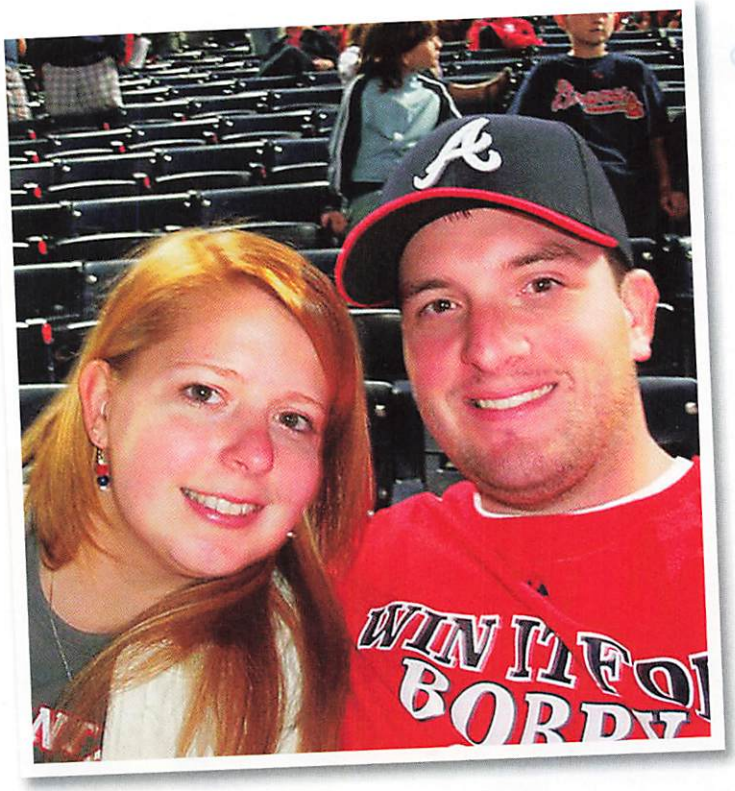
CHIP 'N' PUTT

THE CHIPPER JONES FAMILY Foundation held its eighth annual Celebrity Golf Invitational at Bear's Best Country Club in the Atlanta suburb of Suwanee on Nov. 8, raising over $150,000 for the foundation recipients - Stetson University, Cystic Fibrosis, Camp Twin Lakes, the Boys and Girls Clubs of American, Miracle League, and other causes. Jones (above) was joined by **Brian McCann** and **Craig Kimbrel** and coaches **Terry Pendleton**, **Brian Snitker** and former Braves player and coach **Glenn Hubbard**. **Danny Hall**, head baseball coach at Georgia Tech, was also on hand, as were former Braves **Andruw Jones**, **Keith Lockhart** (now a scout for the Cubs), **Tom Martin** and **Brad Clontz**. Former teammate **Kelly Johnson** (Arizona Diamondbacks) showed up for a while to ride around the course in Chipper's cart and offer pointers. Apparently Johnson wasn't much help to Chipper, because his foursome came in third. The foursome anchored by his father, **Larry Jones**, finished second, and the tournament was won by the foursome paired with rookie White Sox pitcher **Chris Sale**.

TALKIN' CHOP

LETTERS & PHOTOS FROM OUR READERS

WHETHER YOU'RE HAVING FUN AT TURNER FIELD, EXPERIENCING A CLOSE ENCOUNTER WITH YOUR FAVORITE BRAVES PLAYER, OR JUST SHOWING OFF YOUR COLLECTION OF BRAVES STUFF OR TRYING ON YOUR NEW BRAVES SHIRT, WE WANT TO HEAR ABOUT IT AND SEE A PICTURE.



MEMORABLE PROPOSAL

The morning of Oct. 2, I proposed to my long-time girlfriend, Meagan, at the Olympic Rings fountain in Centennial Park. It was one of the first places we visited on our first trip to Atlanta together in 2003. Once we excitedly called family members, it was time to head to Turner Field to watch the game and the Bobby Cox Tribute. It was so amazing to be at the ceremony and see all of the current and former players supporting Bobby! I am so thankful that Meagan and I were able to celebrate such a special day in our lives by being there to honor the only Braves manager we've ever known!

WEST OVERMAN
Williamston, N.C.

IN THE BEGINNING

Our first grandchild, two-month-old Abby Cadol of Williamsburg, Virginia, gets ready for her first post-season by clearly declaring her loyalty to her favorite team, much as her mother Beth did when she was Abby's age. Abby's father, Daniel, understands that being a Braves fan has been inherited (and encouraged!) through Beth's side of the family. We can't wait to take Abby to her first Braves game.

MARILYN & TED MATTIE
Port Angeles, Wash.

BACK IN THE DAY

My husband, Larry Stone, was Bobby Cox's teacher and football and baseball coach at Selma High School and has followed his career ever since. Larry is reading Chop Talk as I write.

Our grandson, Christopher Lawrence Stone (named for his grandpa), will be at the last series of the season with Philadelphia. We are thankful to (Braves director of travel) Bill Acree for arranging tickets to that series for Christopher and his half-brother, Stephan Maule. Chris is stationed at the Air Force base in Minot, N.D., and just got back from Qatar where he served several months.

We watched Bobby grow up in Selma, from the time he was in Little League. Our son, David (Christopher's father), is the same age as Bobby Cox Jr., and they played baseball together at Selma High in the late '70s and early '80s.

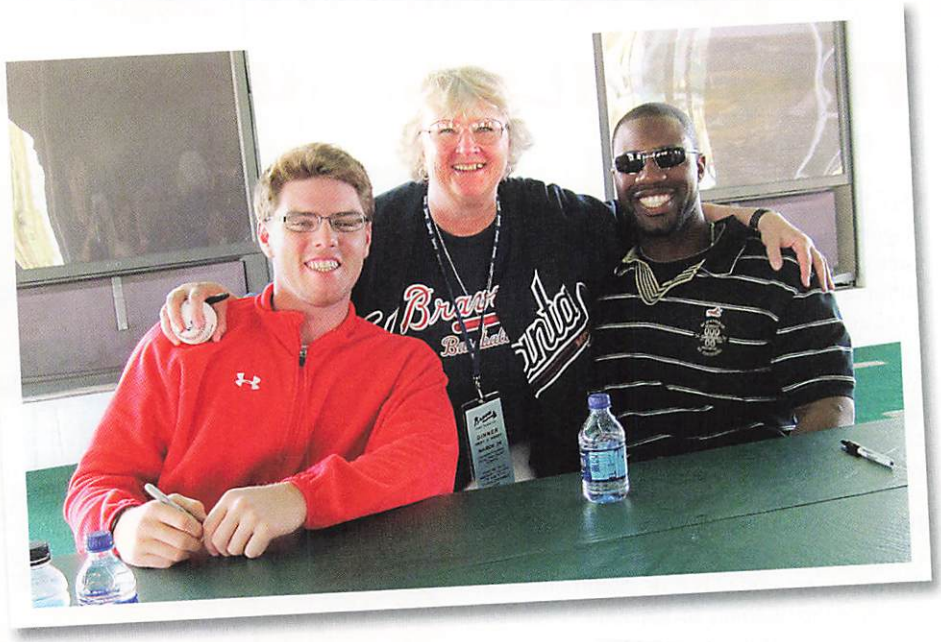
MARCELLA & LARRY STONE
Kingsburg, Calif.

CHOPTALK AND THE ATLANTA BRAVES SUPPORT OUR TROOPS

WHAT A YEAR!

I retired this year and treated myself to Braves spring training and Braves season tickets. What a great time the Braves have given us. The spring training events were a chance to see the Braves up close and personal. I got pictures taken with Jason Heyward, Freddie Freeman and Glenn Hubbard! Being at the park is such fun, and the Braves rewarded us with a great run for Bobby Cox's last season. My new grandchild, Laila, is getting in the Braves' spirit, too. Her sister, Jenn, bought her a Braves outfit. We're getting her off to a great Braves start.

JANET DEAL
Douglasville, Ga



SCORING BIG

After attending the July 20 game against the Padres, several players stayed and signed autographs. We were fortunate enough to get Mike Dunn, Jonny Venters, Jair Jurrjens, Martin Prado and Alex Gonzalez. ChopTalk really is the best way to stay in touch with the Braves and show support for the longest continuously operating team in baseball.

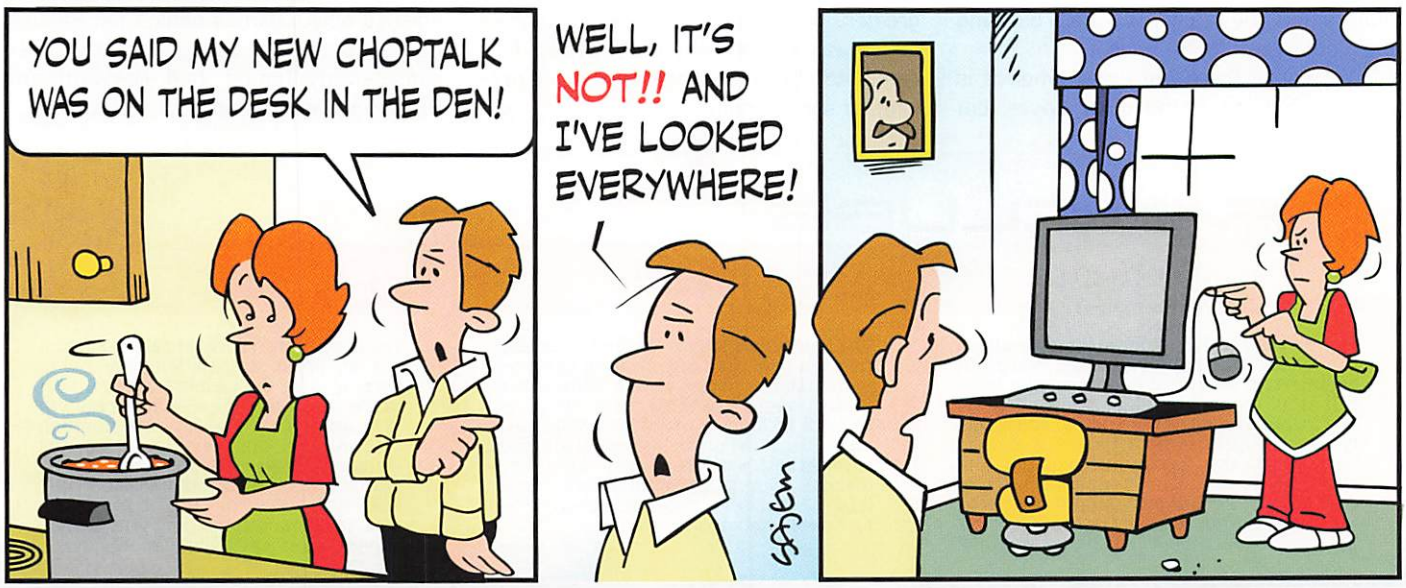
AUSTIN COLLINS
Cairo, Ga.

A DOG'S VIEW

My name is Duffy Morgan, and I love the Braves! I am a Westie. My "mom" has been a Braves fan her whole life. She can remember going to bed with her white transistor radio, listening to Braves games back when we had Felipe Alou, Rico Carty and, of course, The Hammer himself - Hank Aaron. She met Hank a few weeks ago at her golf course - Canongate - and he was as gracious as ever. Thanks, Bobby Cox, for the wonder years, 1991-present.

MARY MORGAN
Newnan, Ga.

GOING DIGITAL



THE PERILS OF HEAD-FIRST SLIDING

BY BILL BALLEW

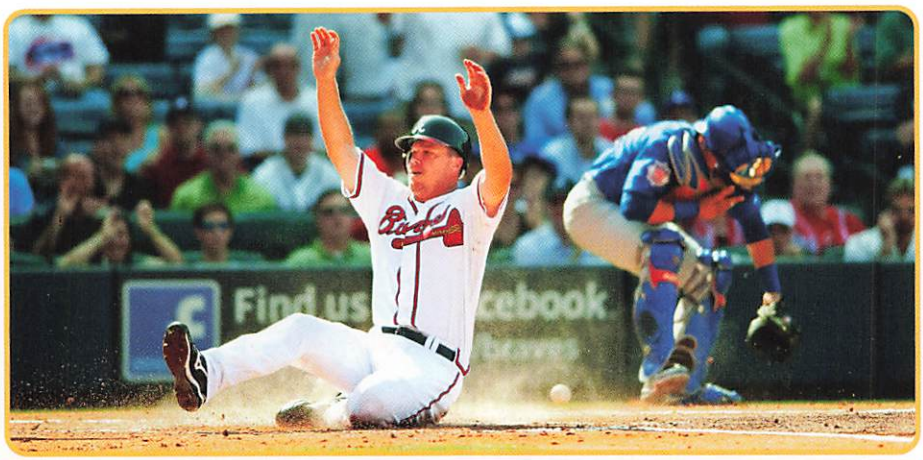
THE BRAVES are making a point of having players use their heads when running the bases. After watching Freddie Freeman suffer a thumb injury in the Arizona Fall League, which followed similar costly injuries incurred by Jason Heyward and Martin Prado during the season, the organization is placing a teaching emphasis on sliding feet-first, instead diving or lunging while trying to reach the base safely.

"So many of the injuries involving hands, thumbs and wrists come while sliding head-first into a base," said Kurt Kemp, the Braves' director of player development. "It's a very difficult thing to legislate, because it's such an instinctive and reaction type of maneuver. Nevertheless, we're doing what we can to promote and encourage guys to slide feet-first."

The Braves emphasized the risks associated with sliding head-first during fall Instructional League held at spring training headquarters at ESPN Wide World of Sports. Every player in the organization also will hear the same message during sliding drills in spring training. Those words will be reinforced as part of the fundamentals of baserunning when roving coaches visit the minor leagues throughout the 2011 season.

"What we're trying to do is to guide players in the right way and encourage them to slide feet-first in good, fundamental fashion," Kemp said. "Of course, at no time do we want them sliding head-first into home plate, where the catcher is usually blocking the plate with all of his gear.

"We realize there are times when it is going to happen at the other bases, but we're hoping by stressing the fundamentals as well as the dangers that we can reduce those instances, and in turn, reduce the number of injuries our players experience."



POYA DIANAT/ATLANTA BRAVES

Chipper Jones demonstrates the way the Braves eventually hope to train all their players to slide - feet first.

Freeman, who was in the Arizona Fall League to help prepare for becoming Atlanta's starting first baseman in 2011, had to return home after only five games. He initially injured his left thumb earlier in the game while making a diving attempt to catch a foul ball. The situation became worse a few innings later when he jammed the thumb while sliding head-first into third base.

"If we had tried to get him back out on the field in a week or two, the risk of injuring the thumb more severely would have been greater," Kemp said. "The best course of action was to rest it and make certain he's completely healed so that he'll be 100 percent for spring training."

Heyward got off to a spectacular start to his rookie season, being named NL Rookie of the Month for both April and May. However, he sustained a deep bone bruise in his left thumb sliding head-first May 14. He continued to play with it but eventually went on the disabled list June 28 with his production in decline from the injury.

Prado broke the second knuckle on his little finger July 30 sliding head-first into home plate. He missed over two weeks and appeared not to be the same hitter when he returned. He was hitting .315 with 13 home runs at the time of the injury but batted only .286 with 2 homers the rest of the way.

There's no telling how many wins those two injuries cost the Braves, but since they finished only 6 games behind the Phillies, it's safe to say the race would have been considerably tighter had Heyward and Prado had healthy hands.

FAN CLUBS

BRAVES 400 FAN CLUB

The Braves 400 Fan Club is the official fan club of the Atlanta Braves. It is a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting baseball at all levels. Annual membership is $25 and includes a newsletter and the opportunity to participate in activities such as road trips, luncheons, the annual banquet, and charitable events. Send payment to: Braves 400 Fan Club, P.O. Box 7689, Atlanta, Ga. 30309. For more information, call the organization's hotline at (770) 416-4539 or visit braves400.org.

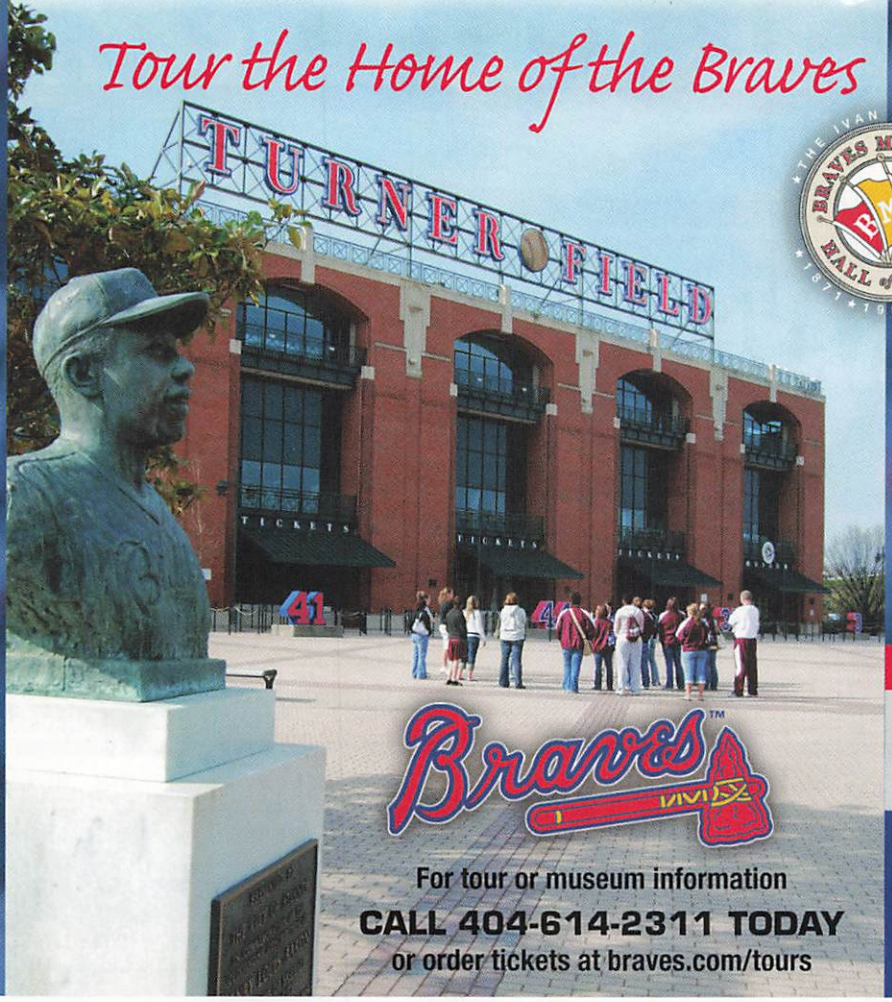
MILWAUKEE BRAVES HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

The Milwaukee Braves Historical Association is a non-profit organization that promotes the memory of the Milwaukee Braves (1953-65). Annual membership is $25 and includes a newsletter. Send payment to: Milwaukee Braves Historical Association, 6700 N. Range Line Rd., Glendale, Wisc. 53209. For information, call (414) 347-1212 or visit milwaukeebraveshistoricalassociation.com.

BOSTON BRAVES HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

The Boston Braves Historical Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to keeping alive the memory of the Braves in the city where the franchise began in 1871 and that it represented through 1952. Annual membership is $15 and includes a newsletter. Send payment to: Boston Braves Historical Association, P.O. Box 67195, Chestnut Hill, Mass. 02467-0002. For more information, visit Bostonbraves.com or e-mail bbraves@beld.net.

Tour the Home of the Braves



BRAVES MUSEUM & HALL of FAME

VISIT THE BRAVES MUSEUM & HALL OF FAME AT TURNER FIELD and view more than 600 Braves artifacts and photographs on display. See items from the team's years in Boston (1871-1952), Milwaukee (1953-65), and Atlanta (1966-present), including Hank Aaron's 715th home run bat and ball, the 1995 World Series trophy and much more.

TAKE A ONE-HOUR GUIDED TOUR OF TURNER FIELD to many areas off limits during games, such as the press box, clubhouse, dugout and the SunTrust Club.

BOOK YOUR SCHOOL TOUR

During the 2010-11 school year, the museum will offer customized tours for elementary, middle and high school classes. Group and school tours are offered year-round, including specialized tours on the subjects of math, history and careers in sports.

Choose Your Subject:
Mathematics
History
Careers in Sports

Braves™

For tour or museum information
CALL 404-614-2311 TODAY
or order tickets at braves.com/tours

T-Shirts | Caps | Jerseys | Jackets | Ladies Apparel | Youth Apparel | Novelties | Collectibles | Game-Used Merchandise | 404-523-5854

WE'VE OUTFITTED THE BRAVES, WE CAN DO THE SAME FOR YOU

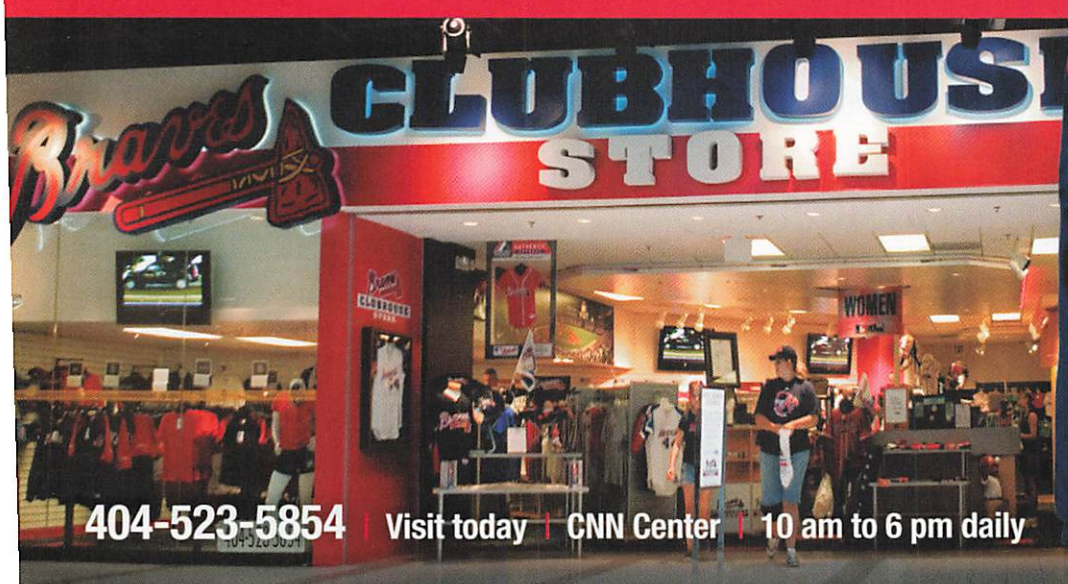
For over 25 years, the Braves Clubhouse Store at CNN Center has been Braves Fans' source for Braves T-shirts, Caps, Jackets, Jerseys and much more. The store offers Atlanta's best selection of Men's, Women's and Children's Braves Merchandise. In addition, you'll find collectible items like Limited Edition autographed items and authenticated Game-Used items.

Braves CLUBHOUSE STORE

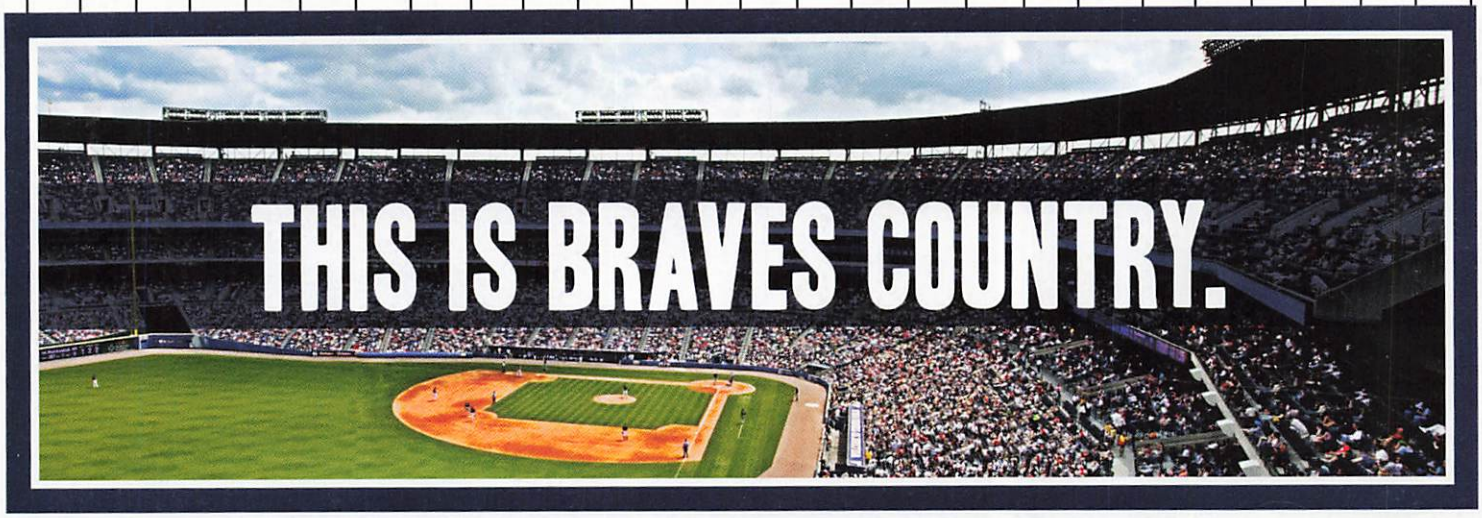
NEW FOR 2011

All New Triple Peak Jacket by Majestic

The new 2011 Authentic Onfield Jacket worn by the players. #1201 S-XXL $125.00



404-523-5854 | Visit today | CNN Center | 10 am to 6 pm daily



2011 SEASON SCHEDULE

MARCH/APRIL

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		29 EXH MIN 7:00	30 EXH MIN 12:00	31 WAS	1	2 WAS
3 WAS	4 MIL	5 MIL	6 MIL	7 MIL	8 PHI 7:30	9 PHI 7:00
10 PHI 1:30	11	12 FLA 7:00	13 FLA 7:00	14 FLA 7:00	15 NYM 7:30	16 NYM 7:00
17 NYM 1:30	18 LAD	19 LAD	20 LAD	21 LAD	22 SF	23 SF
24 SF	25 SD	26 SD	27 SD	28	29 STL 7:30	30 STL 7:00

JUNE

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1 SD 7:00	2	3 NYM	4 NYM
5 NYM	6	7 FLA	8 FLA	9 FLA	10 HOU	11 HOU
12 HOU	13 HOU	14 NYM 7:00	15 NYM 7:00	16 NYM 7:00	17 TEX 7:30	18 TEX 7:00
19 TEX 1:30	20 TOR 7:00	21 TOR 7:00	22 TOR 1:00	23	24 SD	25 SD
26 SD	27 SEA	28 SEA	29 SEA	30		

AUGUST

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1 WAS	2 WAS	3 WAS	4	5 NYM	6 NYM
7 NYM	8 FLA	9 FLA	10 FLA	11	12 CHC 7:30	13 CHC 7:00
14 CHC 1:30	15 SF 7:00	16 SF 7:00	17 SF 7:00	18 SF 7:00	19 ARZ 7:30	20 ARZ 7:00
21 ARZ 1:30	22 CHC	23 CHC	24 CHC	25 CHC	26 NYM	27 NYM
28 NYM	29	30 WAS 7:00	31 WAS 7:00			

MAY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1 STL 1:30	2 MIL 7:00	3 MIL 7:00	4 MIL 7:00	5 MIL 7:00	6 PHI	7 PHI
8 PHI	9	10 WAS 7:00	11 WAS 7:00	12 WAS 7:00	13 PHI 7:30	14 PHI 7:00
15 PHI 1:30	16 HOU 7:00	17 HOU 1:00	18 ARZ	19 ARZ	20 LAA	21 LAA
22 LAA	23	24 PIT	25 PIT	26	27 CIN 7:30	28 CIN 7:00
29 CIN 1:30	30 SD 1:00	31 SD 7:00				

JULY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1 BAL 7:30	2 BAL 7:00
3 BAL 1:30	4 COL 7:00	5 COL 7:00	6 COL 7:00	7 COL 1:00	8 PHI	9 PHI
10 PHI	11 12 13 14 ALL-STAR GAME - ARIZONA				15 WAS 7:30	16 WAS 7:00
17 WAS 1:30	18 COL	19 COL	20 COL	21 COL	22 CIN	23 CIN
24 CIN	25 PIT 7:00	26 PIT 7:00	27 PIT 7:00	28 PIT 7:00	29 FLA 7:30	30 FLA 7:00
31 FLA 1:30						

SEPTEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1 WAS 7:00	2 LAD 7:30	3 LAD 7:00
4 LAD 1:30	5 PHI	6 PHI	7 PHI	8	9 STL	10 STL
11 STL	12 FLA 7:00	13 FLA 7:00	14 FLA 12:00	15	16 NYM 7:30	17 NYM 7:00
18 NYM 1:30	19 FLA	20 FLA	21 FLA	22	23 WAS	24 WAS
25 WAS	26 PHI 7:00	27 PHI 7:00	28 PHI 7:00	29	30	

*All times are Eastern and subject to change.
Schedule subject to change.

Home Game

ENTERTAIN YOUR GROUP AT THE BALLPARK

The 2011 Braves home schedule features some of the biggest games in baseball — and affordable, flexible and fun ways to enjoy them for your next group event, such as:

- Parties of 20 or more receive discounts in the best seating locations
- Recognize your kids with a pregame parade, or watch them take the field with their favorite players
- Raise funds for your nonprofit organization
- See your group's name on the giant Tomahawk LED Board
- Host a pregame picnic in a special patio setting
- For truly one-of-a-kind accommodations, reserve a luxurious private suite on the Golden Moon Casino Level for your friends, family, co-workers or clients, and enjoy Braves baseball in style and comfort

Visit braves.com/groups or call 404.577.9100 now for more information.

© 2010, Atlanta National League Baseball Club, Inc. All rights reserved.™ The Braves script and tomahawk are trademarks of the Atlanta National League Baseball Club, Inc. All rights reserved.